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DAILY GLEANINGS

OF THE

SAINTLY LIFE

COMPILED BY

C. M. S.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY THE REV.

M. F. SADLER, M.A.

PREBENDARY OF WELLS

AND RECTOR OF HONITON, DEVON



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PREFACE.

THE following pages contain an attempt to illustrate and enforce the higher Christian life from the writings of some of the leading divines of the great Catholic Revival in the Church of England in our own day.

The plan of Daily Readings or Meditations is one which has been adopted by all schools of religious thought. Dr. Hawker's "Morning and Evening Portions" were written for the use of the high Calvinists of his day, and Bishop Challoner also in the last century published "Meditations for Every Day of the Year," for the use of Christians of the Roman Obedience.

The Rev. Peter Young's "Daily Readings" are a treasury of devout meditations arranged according to the Christian year, but confined exclusively to the events of our Lord's Life as recorded in the Gospels.

I do not know of the existence of any work on the

plan of the present one, that is, composed of readings and extracts from the works of the later Anglican divines and sacred poets, except, perhaps, that of the late Alexander Watson, entitled "The Devout Christian;" but this, having been compiled nearly thirty-five years ago, was published but a little after the commencement of the great Catholic movement of the present century, and so can contain only to a small extent gleanings from the writers who have made the practical and experimental theology of the Church of England more deep and real than that of any former period.

I have read carefully through and corrected for the press all these extracts, and desire to express in as plain terms as I can what I conceive to be their characteristics. * They seem to be, all of them, natural and real, heart speaking to heart; no verbiage, no heaping up of high-sounding or gushing epithets, but for the most part, as far as I remember, they are simple and chastened to a degree. They are all, or almost all, eminently practical. The great dogmas or doctrines of the faith, as set forth in the Prayer Book, are taken for a foundation, and a superstructure of serious and devout application to heart and conscience is built upon them.

In almost every page some branch of the spiritual life, which from its importance is worthy of distinct consideration, is treated by itself; so that each meditation is a separate whole, and the conclusion has never to be sought for in some subsequent reading. On this account I cannot help hoping that this volume of extracts will be of much service to ministers and teachers as well as to private Christians.

With respect to the devout use of this book I cannot enforce it better than by a "Gleaning" from the preface of one of the oldest, perhaps the oldest, of these manuals: "Thou must ever, dear reader, begin this exercise by the faith and remembrance of the presence of God, and by humbly imploring His light, grace, and assistance. Thou must also observe that these considerations are not designed to be a matter of barren study or speculation of the brain, but to be the seeds of pious affections in the heart, which affections are looked upon by spiritual writers as the principal part of mental prayer; as tending directly to bring the soul to her God, and to unite her to Him by Divine love."

I cannot conclude this short preface without expressing my thankfulness first to the Compiler, in that she has brought together, with such labour and pains, from

such a variety of sources, so much that is calculated to raise the soul to God, and instruct it in the Divine life. The care with which I have had to read them for a critical purpose has not been without some good effect on myself, and I am sure that they who read these Gleanings devotionally, that is, for the one purpose for which they have been gathered, cannot fail of receiving a still greater blessing.

I also record my humble thanks to Almighty God that one who by His grace has been enabled to profit somewhat in past years under my ministry has been privileged to carry out so good a work.

M. F. S.

HONITON,
Tuesday in the
Octave of the Ascension, 1879.

Advertisement.

THE Compiler takes this opportunity of returning her sincere thanks to the two kind friends who have helped her with their advice and oversight of her work ; and to the Authors, or Publishers, who have so courteously allowed her to make extracts from their books.

She commits the result of her labours to the blessing of God, humbly beseeching Him that He may make it the means of suggesting holy thoughts and good desires to many of His children, and so of making them to grow in that "Saintly Life" which, in His undeserved mercy, He has seen fit to revive amongst us.

C. M. S.

July 1879.

O LOVING SPIRIT, gently lay
Thine arm on ours when we would stray !
Prepare us with Thy warnings sweet,
Us and our little ones, to greet
Thy visitations dread and dear !
Grant us, when holy times are near,
In twilight or of morn or eve,
Thy dove-like whisperings to receive,
And own them kindlier for the plaintive mood
That breathes of contrite Love, mild Hope, and Joy subdued.

JOHN KEBLE.

First Sunday in Advent.

Now it is high time to awake out of sleep. ROMANS xiii. 11.

TAKE up your stand where ye are now, amid the temptations, cares, deceits, follies of the day, thence look forward anew to the vanities of the world, its schemes and pleasures, its strifes, wealth and honours, the praise of men, the gaining of all your wishes out of God. Hold in your grasp all that your minds ever pictured of good out of God. Add pleasure to pleasure, gain to gain, self-indulgence to self-indulgence ; stretch out your sight, month after month, year after year. Be it that each step, instead of weariness and loathing, should but satisfy your hearts the more ! We will look on with you, if you will look on with us step by step through all the years of time ; grant all you claim, if you will look on with us beyond all time to eternity. Imagine what you will do, enjoy, or sin, next and next ; so you still ask on, But what next ? And what afterward ? "What afterwards ?" belongs to time ; ask on beyond all time, What is that "afterwards" which has no "afterwards" ? Do what you will, so that those words, "What afterwards ?" ring in your ears, and you with truth will answer them. When you are tempted to sin, pause, ask yourself steadfastly, And what afterwards ? Await the answer (sin has but one "afterwards," deep penitence or hell), and through God's mercy on your soul, you will sin no longer. These words, "What afterwards ?" have by God's mercy converted souls to Him, for surely no things of time can satisfy a soul made to out-live all time ; nothing created can fill the soul made for its Creator.

Reader and writer on that morn must meet ;
Thrice happy, could this theme arouse but one
To hide his brow on his uplifted hand,
Recalling his past life in silent prayer.

I

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First Week in Advent.—Monday.

O that they were wise . . . that they would consider their latter end ! DEUTERONOMY xxxii. 29.

“WHETHER I eat, whether I drink,” says an ancient Father, “whether I study, whatsoever I do, that last trumpet ever soundeth in my ears, ‘Arise, ye dead, come to judgment.’” “In every work,” it is an ancient rule, “let each say to himself, Wert thou about to die, wouldest thou do this?” All we whom God has placed or brought back into the narrow way have need to try again and again what we *are doing*, by that searching test, How shall we look upon it when all “is done”? Things around dazzle us, self-pleasing thoughts mislead us ; we have to stick closer and closer into the narrow way, closer to cleave to God, more and more to part with all which would keep us from God. Wherever, then, we may be, in the course heavenward each morning let us place before ourselves that morning which has no evening ; and purpose to do that only which we shall wish we had done when we shall see it in the light of that morning when, in the brightness of His presence, every plea of self-love which now clouds our eyes shall melt away. Each evening set before us that night “wherein no man can work,” resolve by God’s grace to work on the morrow, if we see it, more steadfastly the works of God.

Sum up at night what thou hast done by day ;
And in the morning, what thou hast to do.
Dress and undress thy soul ; mark the decay
And growth of it : if with thy watch that too
Be down, then wind up both ; since we shall be
Most surely judged, make thy accounts agree.
In brief, acquit thee bravely ; play the man,
Look not on pleasures as they come but go.
Defer not the least virtue :
If thou do ill, the joy fades, not the pains :
If well ; the pain doth fade, the joy remains.

First Week in Advent.—Tuesday.

That which ye have spoken in the ear in closets shall be proclaimed upon the housetops. S. LUKE xii. 3.

No word of folly or of sin “whispered in the ear” but shall be proclaimed on the housetop. Look as steadfastly as you can on that awful day, when the thrones shall be set, the books opened, when the tempter shall become the accuser, and for every forgotten sin claim us as his own lawful property. See him bringing before thee God’s calls which thou wasted, the mercy thou despisedst, the grace thou slightedst, the times of prayer thou neglectedst, the love against which thou sinnedst, asking, “Is this Thy Son’s robe or no? Is this the Robe of Righteousness wherewith Thou didst anew clothe him? Are these filthy rags, this garment spotted by the flesh which Thou didst bid him hate? Whose tokens are these, mine or Thine?” Can ye deny a bitter past of sins, negligences, ignorances, the remembrance whereof “is grievous,” the burden intolerable, which ye would wash out if you could with tears of blood? All which we have hid from ourselves now will throng around us. When God calls them to our memory they will say, “Here we are.” What can we say then but, “Enter not into judgment with Thy servant, O Lord.” To Him, then, we would look. What a sight! His holiness and His love! Do not His very wounds and open Side upbraid us. Do they not say to us, in His Name, “Where is the fruit of these My sufferings? Where the price of My Blood? I set you above the glory I had with the Father.”

Lord, ere our trembling lamps sink down and die,
Touch us with chastening hand, and make us feel Thee nigh.

First Week in Advent.—Wednesday.

Barabbas or Jesus. S. MATTHEW xxvii. 17.

LET us now bring home to our hearts the solemn responsibility which by our creation and redemption it has pleased God to lay on us the greatness of the alternative which of necessity is proposed to us, Barabbas or Jesus, the Saviour or sin. The choice is continual and unceasing. The alternative is sometimes pressed upon us with immeasurable weight. At other times it seems to rest upon us lightly, but it is not the less surely and seriously recurring. In every, the least thing as well as in the greatest, in the common daily round of life, in our deeds, in our words, in our thoughts, in our friendships, in our labour and in our amusements, in society and alone, in our gesture and our raiment, in our very meat and drink, we must be always taking one side or other of the alternative, and forming or ripening in ourselves by every such act that abiding choice or love which makes our character and determines our prospects through all eternity. For right and wrong attend on everything; Christ is the law of right in all things. It is by a repetition of right choice that through God's grace we grow holy, by a repetition of wrong choice that we grow unholy.

If we now the soul surrender
Unto all that Christ doth say,
Grace and Mercy shall defend her,
While so many go astray;
With pride and lust unheeding are they led,
And know not that they tend to city of the dead.

See throughout the swarming city
Countless multitudes that throng,
Unto whom celestial Pity
Calls to pause—yet calls not long;
For, one by one, full fast they disappear
Into the silent grave, where none her voice can hear.

First Week in Advent.—Thursday.

The Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil. I S. JOHN iii. 8.

WHAT are the works of the devil in each of us? Enmity to God, alienation from Him, and this Christ came to cast out of us, so that we should be the friends, nay, rather the loving children of God Himself. Selfishness is a work of Satan, the Son of God came that He might destroy this by opening our hearts to one another, as His Heart was open towards us. Impurity in all its forms is a work of the devil; and S. John writes that every man that hath this hope in him, the hope, that is, of seeing Christ for ever, purifieth himself even as He is pure. Malice, envy, ill-will, slander, party spirit,—all these are works of the devil; and the Son of God came to cast them out of us. Shall we cherish within us the evil things which the Son of God Himself came to destroy? And as we must not for Christ's sake suffer these evil things within us, so neither must we acquiesce in their existing around us: we must not be content to see them in our neighbours, in our brethren, in the Church, in the world. Let us by our prayers, by our example, by our influence, by our good conversation, fight determinedly against them, and so, and only so, shall we be assured that we are on the side of Christ.

Be brave, my brother!
Fight the good fight of faith
With weapons proved and true;
Be faithful and unshrinking to the death,
Thy God will bear thee through.
The strife is terrible, &
Yet 'tis not, 'tis not long;
The foe is not invincible,
Though fierce and strong.

First Week in Advent.—Friday.

Fight the good fight of faith. I TIMOTHY vi. 12.

MEMBERS of a Church militant, you have a post to gain and to maintain, and this cannot be done without an arduous and continuous struggle. This post can only be gained, can only be maintained by Faith. Faith must lead you to desire it, Faith must rouse you to seek it, Faith must strengthen you to conquer it, Faith must give you endurance and watchfulness to preserve it. You have a formidable enemy to battle against, *Sin*, in *all* its forms. You have to fight against Sin, both within your own hearts and in the world; but above and before all within you. Nothing effectual can be achieved outwardly, no victory of any moment can be gained, until Sin is subdued and quelled within your own hearts. Strive therefore, in the first place, to cast out the Evil Spirit from your own hearts; pray to God to cast it out, pray to God to strengthen that Faith in you which will enable you to cast out and to keep out the Evil Spirit, even the Faith of Jesus.

PEACE—

Again, again thou must return,
And of that holy childhood learn;
Clothed in this form of wisdom mild,
He there would teach thee as a child
To turn from manhood's wisdom high,
And learn of helpless infancy.

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VIRTUE—

Meek pilgrim, sore beset with foes,
And marked with scars that speak thy woes,
Upon thy way still onward press,
And look to Him in thy distress.
He gives hinds' feet to climb on high,
And eagles' wings wherewith to fly.

First Week in Advent.—Saturday.

This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our Faith.
1 S. JOHN v. 4.

By Faith S. Bonaventura, being asked in what books he had learned his marvellous wisdom, pointed to his crucifix. Go forth in this spirit, and may God bless you with His choicest blessings. Go forth in Faith to overcome the world, strong in the Lord and in the power of His might, and may Christ give you, as He has promised to them that overcome, to eat of the Tree of Life which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.

Touch Thou our wayward hearts, and let them be
In stronger faith to Thy glad service given,
Till o'er the margin of time's surging sea
We sing the song of heaven !

No sickness is there, no bleak bitter cold,
No hunger, debt, prison, or weariful toil ;
No robbers to rifle our treasure of gold,
No rust to corrupt, and no canker to spoil.

My God ! and it was but a short hour ago
That I lay on a bed of unbearable pains ;
All was cheerless around me, all weeping and woe,
Now the wailing is changed to angelical strains.

Because I served Thee, were life's pleasures all lost ?
Was it gloom, pain, or blood, that won heaven for me ?
Ah no ! one enjoyment alone could life boast,
And that, dearest Lord, was my service of Thee.

I had hardly to give ; 'twas enough to receive ;
Only not to impede the sweet grace from above :
And, this first hour in heaven, I can hardly believe
In so great a reward for so little a love.

Second Sunday in Advent.

Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear to all. 1 TIMOTHY iv. 15.

HOLY meditation is needful to deepen in us what we believe. There are times which especially call us to meditation. When we kneel down to pray at night, and bring together all those proofs of our weakness and nothingness which the day has brought to light, side by side with the awful holiness of Him before Whom we come, after prayer, after we have been speaking with the Lord, and at last have drawn our thoughts and feelings together and have forgotten in some measure this world, and have felt that there is nothing for us but God, nothing between us and God, then it is most healthful, after we have finished speaking, to pause before we rise, and think and feel ourselves before Him, and with Him, before and with Whom we trust to be for ever. Before receiving the Holy Communion we are called upon not only to examine ourselves, and to confess and pray, but to think what we are preparing to do, to think that we are seeking to have Him in our hearts Whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain, to eat His Flesh Whose Hands, Whose Feet, Whose sacred Head were pierced by us, and to drink the Blood of those His blessed wounds. And after receiving, "be with God and thyself," says a saint, "enjoy, feel, tell over in thy heart what, rather Whom, thou hast received." When we are waiting in church before and after service, or when we awake in the stillness of the night, holy meditation comes to us of itself, we should cherish it in our breasts.

Till in the strength of holy love
We see things in the light in which they're seen above.

Second Week in Advent.—Monday.

O how love I Thy law! it is my meditation all the day. Thou through Thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies; for they are ever with me. I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my meditation. PSALM cxix. 97-99.

MEDITATION is the way to a profitable knowledge. We must look to meditation for our comfort to calm us in the turmoil of the world, to support us in sorrow. For this world in which we live, and these times very especially, are restless and noisy and disturbed, very unlike to heaven, and unless we are careful, such as will unfit us for heaven; and yet in the midst of this very evil world by holy meditation saints are being ripened day by day for God's paradise.

There are in this loud stunning tide
Of human care and crime,
With whom the melodies abide
Of th' everlasting chime;
Who carry music in their heart
Through dusky lane and wrangling mart,
Plying their daily task with busier feet,
Because their secret souls a holy strain repeat.

Rise, O my soul, with thy desires to heaven,
And with divinest contemplation use
Thy time, where Time's eternity is given,
And let vain thoughts no more thy thoughts abuse;
But down in darkness let them lie,
So live thy better, let thy worse thoughts die.
To Thee, O Jesu, I direct my eye,
To Thee my hands, to Thee my humble knees,
To Thee my heart shall offer sacrifice,
To Thee my thoughts, Who my thoughts only sees;
To Thee myself and all I give;
To Thee I die, to Thee I only live.

Second Week in Advent.—Tuesday.

I hate vain thoughts : but Thy law do I love. PSALM cxix.
113.

WE may fly to holy meditation as the great remedy of evil thoughts. Satan is ever seeking to defile our souls by casting in evil desires and ideas. As the birds would have destroyed the sacrifice of Abraham, as the tares of the parable which Satan sowed lessened the fruitfulness and destroyed the purity of the field of wheat, so sinful thoughts are continually sent us by the Evil One to destroy the sacrifice of our hearts and to blot out our good works with sin. Certainly the first help against an evil thought is prayer, quiet, short, earnest prayer to Christ to beat down Satan under our feet. But we must do more. The parable of the unclean spirits teaches us this great truth, that we can only supplant sin by holiness. The man's heart was empty, and so the evil spirit came back, and seven others more wicked than himself came with him. When we cast out a sinful thought we must fill our souls at once with a holy meditation, or else the sin will come back again, and finding room for itself, will lodge there and draw after it other worse imaginations and fouler visions of evil. The Psalmist not only flies the sinful thought but hastens to the holy.

We bear a world about us—aye on wing,
And with us, and to which this sky-roofed cell,
This strange material ball, is but a thing
Of walking shadows : with us doth it dwell,
Th' undying spirit's world invisible.

Still travelling onward, onward travelling,
Its own horizon round it gathering,
It climbs the stair to heaven's high citadel ;
It hath its clouds, it hath its dews from high,
It hath its moon and darkness ; a wild world
Mounting to join the chain of harmony,
Around the sun that lights eternity.

Second Week in Advent.—Wednesday.

I will meditate also of all Thy work. PSALM lxxvii. 12.

O INDEED we cannot tell how much covetousness we might have escaped, how much censoriousness, how much vanity, how many foul defiling thoughts which have made our souls, though we see it not, less lovely to the holy angels, less fit for the indwelling of the Spirit. We cannot tell how much quicker to understand the Scriptures, the lessons of God's fair works, the voice of conscience, the pleadings of the Spirit in our souls; how much more fervent in prayer, melting with holy sorrow, joyful through hope, and rooted in charity we might have become, had we been careful to close our hearts against Satan, and to sweep and garnish them for the Holy Spirit alone, by devout thoughts and sacred meditations.

Light of the soul, O Saviour blest !
Soon as Thy presence fills the breast,
Darkness and guilt are put to flight,
And all is sweetness and delight.

Son of the Father ! Lord most high !
How glad is he who feels Thee nigh !
How sweet in heaven Thy beam doth glow,
Denied to eye of flesh below !

O Light of Light celestial !
O Charity ineffable !
Come in Thy hidden Majesty ;
Fill us with love, fill us with Thee.

Second Week in Advent.—Thursday.

Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning; that we, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope. ROMANS xv. 4.

THE Holy Scriptures supply us with food for meditation, as also does each article of the Creed, each petition of the Lord's Prayer, each of the blessings in the Sermon on the Mount and the seven speeches from the Cross. And indeed all the works of God around us, as well as the work of our own hand, supply us with holy thoughts. The parables and the miracles of our Lord have made the land and water, and the living things which move in them, one ever present Gospel to us. Sun and stars and wind, flowers and corn and flocks, are all united with some holy doctrine or duty. Our labour also reminds us of the warning in the parable of the talents, or of the consolation in that of the labourers in the vineyard, or of the Christian merchant seeking the pearl of salvation, or of the lost money which we were until God's unwearied love found us again. From different trades and callings Apostles or Evangelists were chosen, so that they too are joined to holy thoughts and bright examples. And if the mind is weary and cannot reach to think of these things, nor is strong enough after much labour and trouble to think of the spiritual meanings of things around, yet there is ever one subject to which we can turn when we are cold and lifeless and worn, even the Cross of Christ.

Hold Thou Thy Cross before my closing eyes:
Shine through the gloom, and point me to the skies.
Heaven's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows flee;
In life, in death, O Lord, abide with me.

I need Thy presence every passing hour;
What but Thy grace can foil the tempter's power?
Who like Thyself my guide and stay can be?
Through cloud and sunshine, Lord, abide with me.

Second Week in Advent.—Friday.

My hands also will I lift up unto Thy commandments, which I have loved; and I will meditate in Thy statutes. PSALM cxix. 48.

BLESSED as is the privilege of holy meditation, yet we must not allow this sacred exercise to become a snare to us, to put scruples in our conscience, or make our hearts uneasy. For if we have not (as yet) been accustomed to it, it will be hard at first, and for a long time, if not always, very imperfect; times will come when from various causes we shall lose the command of our thoughts, just as sometimes we cannot walk or work from sickness or weariness, so after fatigue or trouble we cannot think. When this has been the case, so that we could not meditate, we must remember that we have not sinned. Holy meditation is not a yoke, but a staff; not a goal, but a way; not a law, but a privilege. When we are weary and weak, we are often unable to avail ourselves of this blessing. With a clear and peaceful conscience we must wait for better times, and meanwhile we can pray.

A mind self-ruled by Christian laws,
Alone hath that from whence it draws,
What nothing can alloy.

Retire within thyself, be bold,
With God exalted converse hold
In penitence and prayer:
Learn as thou view'st the soft blue sky,
To rise in holy ecstasy
And claim a Father there.

Affect not thou the claim of worth,
It fits but ill, frail son of earth,
To measure works with Heaven;
Confess thy sins, be inly just,
Be pure of heart, and simply trust
Through Christ thou'lt be forgiven.

Second Week in Advent.—Saturday.

My hands also will I lift up unto Thy commandments, which I have loved; and I will meditate in Thy statutes. PSALM cxix. 48.

IF we should ever become more able to meditate, and learn at last to delight in it and frequently to enjoy it, we must then be on our guard not to suffer thinking to interfere with acting. Some who are not careful, whilst they think about duty, forget that they have it to do as well as to meditate upon; they neglect to do that which comes to their hand, are vexed when their thoughts are broken up, and speak coldly and unkindly to those who interrupt them. This is a great mistake, to think of Jesus, but not to obey Him; to meditate upon His commandments, yet not to keep them. "It is sweet," said a holy man, "to leave Jesus for Jesus." He meant that it was sweet to leave prayer and holy thought when the Saviour calls away from them to holy action, to discharge some duty to His glory, to be a comfort to His members, and to show that our faith and love are true and we not deceiving ourselves. See S. John, who lay on Jesus' Breast, the Apostle of holy thought and contemplation. But he followed his Master to the judgment hall and to the Cross, and was at hand ready in that awful hour to receive the Virgin Mary from her dying Son. Holy thoughts and holy deeds are not separate. If religious acts do not follow religious meditation, then those meditations are false and deceiving.

All must be earnest in a world like ours.
Not *many* lives, but only one have we,
One, only one;
How sacred should that one life ever be !
That narrow span,
Day after day filled up with blessed toil,
Hour after hour still bringing in new spoil.

Third Sunday in Advent.

Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you. And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained. S. JOHN xx. 21-23.

By giving this wondrous power to His Apostles did the risen Saviour fulfil a promise first made to S. Peter, "I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." A promise afterwards made to all the Apostles. A promise fulfilled by Him Whose promises never fail, as He breathes on His Apostles and gives them the Holy Ghost, and the power of remitting and retaining sins. Here were men with flesh and blood like ourselves, endued with supernatural powers, placed by God Himself between God and man, sent by *One Who was very man*, bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh, yet very and eternal God, the Son of Man and yet the Son of God. He, our Lord Jesus Christ, had claimed as the Son of Man the power to forgive sins, as when He said to the sick of the palsy, "Thy sins are forgiven thee," healing his body that the people might know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins.

But the holy men of God such vessels are
As serve Him up, Who all the world commands.
When God vouchsafeth to become our fare,
Their hands convey Him Who conveys their hands:
O what pure things, most pure must those things be
Who bring my God to me!

Therefore I dare not, I, put forth my hand
To hold the Ark, although it seem to shake
Through the old sins and new doctrines of our land;
Only, since God doth often vessels make
Of lowly matter for high uses meet,
I throw me at His feet.

Third Week in Advent.—Monday.

Behold, I send My messenger before Thy Face, which shall prepare Thy way before Thee. S. MATTHEW xi. 10.

UNDER the Old Testament dispensation people were to be saved by a Saviour Who was to come, by a Lamb that was to be slain ; we are saved by the Blood of that Lamb Who has been slain and has taken away sins. Adam confessed his sins in the garden of Eden, and receiving his penance to eat his bread in the sweat of his brow, heard the first whisper of absolution, "The seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent." David confessing his sins before Nathan the prophet, humbling himself before the people, though he had to smart for his sin, yet could hear the word of God's forgiveness from the lips of man, "The Lord also hath put away thy sin." While Saul, on the contrary, excusing his sins before Samuel, impenitent, only caring that Samuel should honour him before the people, is given up by the prophet as hopeless, so that Samuel never came to see Saul again till the day of his death. Nehemiah in times of trial confessed a nation's sin. The high priest every year confessed the sins of the people over the scape-goat. The people of Israel confessed their sins over the heads of innocent victims, and might hope for pardon by virtue of that spotless sacrifice that was to be offered by our Lord Jesus Christ, Himself the Victim and Himself the Priest. S. John the Baptist, baptizing the people, "confessing their sins," told them of the greater nearness of forgiveness when he said, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand," and as he pointed out the Saviour, "Behold the Lamb of God Which taketh away the sins of the world." We say in the Creed that we believe in "the forgiveness of sins," and that our blessed Lord has purchased this forgiveness at the price of His most precious Blood.

Give praise to God.

Third Week in Advent.—Tuesday.

That ye may know that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins. MATTHEW ix. 6.

THE Blood of Jesus may be applied to our souls : 1st, By holy Baptism, wherein babies are forgiven original sin ; and whereas they have been born “children of wrath,” they are hereby made the children of grace by the same sacrament wherein grown-up people, coming with repentance and faith, are forgiven original sin, and all the sins that they have actually committed. 2nd, By absolution, in which those who have sinned after baptism can be restored to a state of grace. 3rd, By holy Communion, in which the pardon already obtained may be sealed as our souls are washed by the precious Blood. 4th, By prayer, as we see from the words which we are taught to say by the Lord Himself in His prayer, “Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us.” Sins and trespasses are as real now as they were eighteen hundred years ago, but, thanks be to God, the remedies are also as real now : there is still “a Fountain open for sin and for uncleanness.”

O blest memorial of our dying Lord,
Who Living Bread to men doth here afford !
O may our souls for ever feed on Thee,
And Thou, O Christ, for ever precious be !

Fountain of goodness, Jesu, Lord and God,
Cleanse us, unclean, with Thy most cleansing Blood,
Increase our faith and love, that we may know
The hope and peace which from Thy presence flow.

O Christ, Whom now beneath a veil we see,
May what we thirst for soon our portion be,
To gaze on Thee unveiled, and see Thy Face,
The vision of Thy Glory and Thy Grace !

Third Week in Advent.—Wednesday.

Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. I CORINTHIANS IV. 1.

GOD's priests speak to you, as they are bound, of the necessity of making your peace with God; if you cannot get this peace without it, they offer you absolution upon a true confession, with real repentance and living faith. The pardon they give is ratified in heaven; in fact they have only given the message, it is Christ the great Absolver Who has forgiven you. They come to you in this way, which is God's way, trying no exciting plans by which they may work you up to a belief that you have assurance in consequence of your feelings; they trust not to man's feelings, but to Christ's ordinance, especially while preparing you to receive your Lord's Body and Blood, so anxious they are that you should have on "the wedding garment," lest you should not discern that Body, lest you should be guilty of that Blood, and insult the Bread which they break and the Cup of blessing which they bless. They tell you that you may "open your griefs," that is, make your confessions, and so receive "the benefit of absolution." They compel you not to do this, there can be no compulsory confession till the Day of Judgment; *then* the secrets of all hearts will be disclosed, when the Judge shall be set and the books opened. May we have so judged ourselves *now*, that we be not judged of the Lord *then*.

Let us cast the way on high,
For His coming;
Cleanse the heart, and make it meet
For His heaven-descended Feet.

Jesu, strength, and solace nigh,
And salvation!
Without Thee, like withering grass
Man doth into nothing pass.

Third Week in Advent.—Thursday.

Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.
ACTS iv. 12.

AND had not His very Name of Jesus proclaimed this truth already? Jesus, “for He shall save His people from their sins;” not merely from hell hereafter, the punishment of sin, but from sins here. He was to proclaim liberty to captives, and to make the slaves of sin the free children of God. As the Babe in the manger of Bethlehem, His Name was Saviour; in the midst of doctors, Saviour; in the carpenter’s shop, Saviour; as He went about doing good, Saviour; in Gethsemane, Saviour; on the Cross, Saviour; in His Easter triumph, Saviour; now on the right hand of the Father, Saviour; and when He comes in like manner as He went into heaven, it will be our fault if we are not able to welcome Him as Saviour. That will depend upon our having known Him here as Saviour, for now, as eighteen hundred years ago, “the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins.” We must understand that our Lord wishes not to save sinners as such, but to save them first from their sins. So we must not only confess that we are sinners, but confess our sins.

Thou mildest Searcher of each heart,
Who know’st the weakness of our strength,
To us forgiving grace impart,
Since we return to Thee at length.

Much have we sinnèd, to our shame,
But spare us, who our sins confess;
And for the glory of Thy Name,
To our sick souls afford redress.

Grant that the flesh may be so pined
By means of outward abstinence,
As that the sober watchful mind
May fast from spots of all offence.

Third Week in Advent.—Friday.

No man can come to Me, except the Father, Which hath sent Me, draw him. S. JOHN vi. 44.

No man, therefore, can come to Christ by reason of natural fitness to appreciate the teaching or the promises of Christ. It is, therefore, by a special act of Divine grace upon each soul that we are drawn to Christ, and accordingly these two truths are especially necessary for us to bear in mind: 1. God will draw onward to Christ each soul which He finds faithful according to the measure of gifts, moral and spiritual, which have been received. 2. Nothing is so destructive to the attraction of grace as the self-complacency whereby men are tempted to think that they have some claim to be drawn further. There are various degrees in which men may come to Christ, but they are all imperfect if they fall short of a real feeding upon Christ. Those who come to Christ He will in nowise cast out. That, however, is no true and effective coming which is merely by way of external approach, whether in worship, faith, or feeling. There must be the complete coming, so that the worshipper may be identified with Christ, to Whom he comes by actual feeding according to His covenanted ordinances.

I come, Almighty King :
Thy mercy's gentle call
So sweetly draws my soul to bring
The tribute of its all :
Enough to know Thou lovest best
The large desire of lowly breast.

I come, O Christ, my Lord :
I cry for Living Bread,
Found but in Thee, the Living Word,
Which all Thy Saints hast fed :
Enough to know who eateth Thee
In everlasting life shall be.

Third Week in Advent.—Saturday.

Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the Word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified. 2 THESSALONIANS iii. 1.

PRAY for us (God's ministers); indeed you may do more (even) than pray for us. You may take us at our word, if you will, and oblige us when we are in your society to speak to you of the things which concern your salvation. You may frown down all levity in us, and demand from us the holiness which you rightly believe is becoming to our office. You may help us and strengthen us by requiring us to help and strengthen you. Oh, would to God that we were vessels meet for the Master's use! But do not misunderstand us: this is all we claim to be, His vessels, His instruments in our vocation and ministry, just as you may be in yours. We cannot act independently of Him, we cannot forgive in our own name; we cannot forgive whom He does not forgive; we cannot bless whom He hath not blessed. If the Son of absolution be not with any sinner, our absolution will not avail him. Without Him, apart from Him, we are nothing; apart from Him we have no strength, no power, no life, no peace, no happiness, no pardon, and no hope, the world is a desolation to us and eternity a blank.

Without Thy presence, heaven's no heaven to me;
Without Thy presence, earth gives no refection;
Without Thy presence, sea affords no treasure;
Without Thy presence, air's a rank infection;
Without Thy presence, heaven itself no pleasure.
If not possessed, if not enjoyed in Thee,
What's earth, or sea, or air, or heaven to me?

In having all things and not Thee, what have I?
Not having Thee, what have my labours got?
Let me enjoy but Thee, what further crave I?
And having Thee alone, what have I not?
I wish nor sea, nor land: nor would I be
Possessed of heaven, heaven unpossessed of Thee.

Fourth Sunday in Advent.

Rejoice in the Lord alway. PHILIPPIANS iv. 4.

SINCE "in Him we do live, and move, and have our being," surely we ought by our own wills "to live, move, and be" in and to Him. In Him we must be by the very law of our being, since out of Him we could not be nor exist; we must live encircled, and enwrapt, and enfolded in and by His being; we belong to Him, we are encompassed by Him. Every breath we draw is through Him. But more blessedly we may be in Him by grace. He is the Life of our soul, the Being of our being; He wills to trust us to Himself. Not more surely does our blood circulate through our veins than the life of our souls may flow into us continually from the Spirit of God. Never decayed, ever renewed. With Him thou mayest ever be; He will walk with thee by the way, He will talk with thee in thy secret heart, He will be with thee as thy Friend; by night or by day He will not be separated from thee; He will teach thee through all who teach. Through every dispensation of His Providence He will instruct thee, He will teach thee to pray by His Spirit within thee. In every trouble He will be with thee, nearer than the trouble nearest to thy heart, for He will be within thee. He will kindle thee with love, He will strengthen thy faith, He will be Himself thy hope.

Fain would my thoughts fly up to Thee,
Thy peace, sweet Lord, to find;
But when I offer, still the world
Lays clogs upon my mind.

Guide then my way, Who art Thyself
My everlasting end;
That every step, or swift or slow,
Still to Thyself may tend.

Fourth Week in Advent.—Monday.

The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the Blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the Body of Christ? I CORINTHIANS x. 16.

THE uses of the Holy Communion are fourfold. It is the most powerful form of prayer and thanksgiving to Almighty God, and that which is most pleasing to His sight, because it is the only kind of public worship ordained by His dear Son our Lord, and because in it our Lord offers Himself to His Father. We offer this sacrifice to Almighty God in four ways—1st, As an act of worship and reverence to Him as our God and King. 2nd, As a thanksgiving (this is the meaning of the word “Eucharist”) to Him as our Helper and Benefactor. 3rd, As a sin-offering to Him as our Judge, asking Him for pardon. 4th, As a prayer for mercies and good things which we need for ourselves or others, living or departed. And in whichever of these ways we offer it, we offer at the same time ourselves, our souls and bodies, to be given up entirely to God in union with Christ’s sacrifice, to do His will.

Jesus, gentlest Saviour !
Thou art in us now ;
Fill us full of goodness
Till our hearts o’erflow.
Pray the prayer within us,
That to heaven shall rise ;
Sing the song that Angels
Sing above the skies.

Multiply our graces,
Chiefly love and fear,
And, dear Lord ! the chiefest,
Grace to persevere.
O how can we thank Thee
For a gift like this,
Gift that truly maketh
Heaven’s eternal bliss !

Fourth Week in Advent.—Tuesday.

Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. S.
MATTHEW xxviii. 20.

THE Holy Communion is one especial way in which our Lord fulfils His promise, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world," and thus gives His Church the benefit of His perpetual Presence; not confined, as in the Jewish Church, to a single spot, to which one man alone had the right of entrance, but shown forth in every land and age upon all the countless altars of the Catholic Church to millions of worshippers. For in the Holy Eucharist, the Shechinah or Presence of God in the cloud of glory and the Passover are blended, and therefore as the Passover might be celebrated everywhere in the world where there are Jews, so everywhere in the world where there are Christian priests, of whatever nation or family, there we may have the Presence of Christ in His own Feast. For, as S. Augustine says, "no man eats this Flesh except he first adores, for the wise men and barbarians did worship this Body in the manger with very much fear and reverence. Let us, therefore, who are citizens of heaven, at least not fall short of the barbarians, for thou seest Him not in the manger, but on the altar, and thou beholdest Him not in the Virgin's arms, but represented by the priest, and brought to thee in sacrifice by the Holy Spirit of God."

Sweet, awful hour! the only sound
One gentle footstep gliding round,
Offering by turns on Jesus' part
The Cross to every hand and heart.

Refresh us, Lord, to hold it fast;
And when Thy veil is drawn at last,
Let us depart where shadows cease,
With words of blessing and of peace.

Fourth Week in Advent.—Wednesday.

He that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me. S. JOHN vi. 57.

A THIRD use of the Holy Communion is union with Christ. For the difference between the Holy Communion and all other prayers that we use is that they are only steps on the road to Christ, but Christ comes into us Himself in the blessed Sacrament, to be the very Food and Drink of our souls. Now, as Christ's Body and Blood are very Christ Himself, when we eat and drink them we eat and drink Him, for He saith, "He that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me." "In Him," says the Apostle, "dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." In Whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, and therefore, as all the nourishing power of bread and all the refreshing power of wine are taken into our bodies when we eat and drink them rightly, so when we receive the Sacrament rightly, we strengthen and refresh our souls by taking into them all the fulness and the treasures of God. Any good thing which is in God, which we need and which He sees to be fit for us, we can have in this holy Sacrament. We can have wisdom, patience, strength, courage, power to conquer sins and temptations, and to gain virtue and perseverance in good, by the grace of that Divine gift; for when we have received it, we can say, "I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me."

True Bread of life, in pitying mercy given
Long-famished souls to strengthen and to feed;
Christ Jesus, Son of God, true Bread of heaven,
Thy flesh is meat, Thy Blood is drink indeed.

Feeding on Thee, all weakness turns to power,
This sickly soul revives, like earth in spring;
Strength floweth on and in, each buoyant hour
This being seems all energy, all wing.

Fourth Week in Advent.—Thursday.

Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth. And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin. ROMANS xiv. 22, 23.

THAT we may obtain the great blessings (at the Holy Communion) we must have faith and penitence. Without these we shall receive the same Body and Blood of Christ in the Sacrament, but for our hurt and not for our good. We read in the Gospel of people touching our Lord in three ways. 1st, In faith, like the woman with the issue of blood, who was cured by touching Him. 2nd, In careless ignorance, like the multitude who thronged Him at the same time, and got no good by it. 3rd, In mockery, like Judas who kissed Him, or like those who smote Him and crucified Him, and thereby incurred most terrible guilt. It was the very same Body in each of these cases; and so it is the very same Body to all communicants, in whichever of these three frames of mind they may come to the Sacrament. Christ's Body and Blood are equally there whether we discern them or not.

Faith lends her realising light,
And clouds and shadows fly;
Th' Invisible appears in sight,
Distinct to mortal eye,
Faith, mighty faith, the promise sees,
And looks to that alone.

Within our souls reveal
Thy love and power to heal,
Be born, and make our hearts Thy cradle
And Thy shrine.

Fourth Week in Advent.—Friday.

So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. ROMANS xii. 5.

THE fourth use of the Holy Communion is union with one another in Christ. As the Church is called in Holy Scripture the "Body of Christ," all the members must be joined to it and to one another, or else it would not be a true living and perfect body; and the Holy Communion is the means by which we are united to one another, because by receiving Christ in that blessed Sacrament each of us is made a part of Him. And as a wife becomes one flesh with her husband, and thereby becomes related to all his kindred in the same degree that he is himself, so the soul which is joined to Christ in the holy Sacrament is united at the same time to the whole body of the faithful, living and departed, and to each member of that body. Two things flow from this union; first, a duty; second, a benefit. Every communicant becomes bound to pray for and help all other Christians so far as he can, and he has in his turn a full share in all the spiritual blessings acquired by the prayers of the whole body.

One family, we dwell in Him,
One Church above, beneath,
Though now divided by the stream,
The narrow stream of death.

One army of the Living God,
To His command we bow,
Part of the host have crossed the flood,
And part are crossing now.

Praised be the God alone
Who hath made of two folds one.

Fourth Week in Advent.—Saturday.

Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. S. MATTHEW xi. 28.

How wide is the welcome which these words convey ! How full of encouragement to many a weary soul ! We are not to look to God's election as a secret law of government, which may be working against us without our being aware. We are to listen to the call of Christ awakening within us the desire to come ; and every movement, however feeble, which we are enabled to make towards Christ, is a token that we can attain to His glory if we will. "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out." We are not to imagine that the grace of Christ will operate for our acceptance with God if we stay away. The power of grace is shown in drawing us to Christ. Unless we come, there can be no acceptance ; but if we come, there can be no rejection. When Christ speaks of our coming to Him, it is specially of sacramental approach that He is speaking. The welcome is for all who come. No unworthiness can debar the *truly penitent soul* from the benefits of coming to Christ. However great our unworthiness may be, in coming to Christ we come out of it, we leave it behind. If we remain under its power we cannot come. True, indeed, we may come outwardly, but to come outwardly alone is not to come at all, for we come not to Christ, unless we come to Him in His inner Divine Being.

Out of a world of grief and wrong,
Where we have wandered all too long,
To Thee, our Father, we return,
Do Thou not spurn !

Thou art our Father, only Good,
Wilt Thou not give us that blest food ?
We on Thine altar for Thine aid
Ourselves have laid.

Christmas Day.

The true Light. . . . And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us. S. JOHN i. 9, 14.

EVERY other light is but a shadow of that true Light, which is Christ; whatever directs a man aright, whether natural conscience or religion, or the Holy Spirit within him, all is from Christ and of Christ. Oh that our steps may be ever in His light; that the day-star may arise in the heart and lead us to Him! May He Himself be in the heart "the bright and morning star," before the full day arise. "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us," or, as it might be rendered, "within us;" and oh may it be so with us this day! He comes to us as of old veiled in a mystery of lowliness, in mean elements; He, "Whose goings forth have been from everlasting," lies hid in Bethlehem, which is by interpretation the House of Bread, Bethlehem, the "little one." May the Incarnate God Who disdained not the lowly manger, come to visit us in this the humble mystery of His altar, and make His tabernacle within our souls; may we have eyes to behold His glory, and in beholding to be changed. His glory was in His humiliation and suffering, and therefore to the carnal mind was He "without form or comeliness, or any beauty, that we should desire Him;" but to them who behold and adore in Him the Only-Begotten of the Father, He is "full of grace," filling their souls out of His own fulness.

True living Bread, the Bread that gives true life,
Make my soul taste Thee, feed on Thee, and live.
O Fount of purity! Jesu, my Lord. . . .
O Thou Whom I behold beneath the veil,
Grant one thing unto me, for which I thirst,
Suppliant I pray Thee, that I may behold
Thy gracious Countenance within the veil;
And, when I see Thy glory, may be blest.

S. Stephen's Day.

And all that sat in the council, looking stedfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel. ACTS vi. 15.

HE Who humbled Himself for our sakes to become man, humbles Himself still to behold man, to dwell in man, to be honoured in man. And so the Church has, in honour of His coming in great humility, gathered around it three festivals of those whom He sanctified, instances of His mercy, specimens of that noble army which as time goes on He is enrolling, who with His holy Angels serve Him here, and who with all the heavenly hosts shall praise Him for ever; the blessed Saint of to-day, the first-fruits of that noble army, an actual and willing Martyr. In S. Stephen every word and action breathes a Divine might and holy awe, bearing down before him the opposition of man's rebellion. It is well to reflect on such a subject as this, in order to humble ourselves. What are our petty sufferings, which we make so much of, to the Martyrs' pains and sorrows, who lost their friends and then their own lives for Christ's sake? By contemplating the lowest of His true servants, and seeing how far any one of them surpasses ourselves, we learn to shrink before His ineffable purity, Who is infinitely holier than the holiest of His creatures, and to confess ourselves with a sincere mind to be unworthy of the least of all His mercies. Thus His Martyrs lead us to Himself, the Chief of Martyrs and the King of Saints.

Great is the Lord in all the earth,
Great are His works in heaven above,
And in the earth below.
He is the King of kings and Lord of all,
Before all worlds begotten of the Father.

S. John the Evangelist's Day.

Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God. 1 S. JOHN iv. 7.

S. JOHN the Apostle and Evangelist is chiefly and most familiarly known to us as the disciple whom Jesus loved. Our Saviour had a private friend, and this shows us, first, how entirely He was a man as much as any of us, His wants and feelings ; and next, that there is nothing inconsistent with the fulness of Christian love, in having our affections directed in an especial way towards certain objects, towards those whom the circumstances of our past life or some peculiarities of character have endeared to us. With our Saviour's pattern before us, the best preparation for loving the world at large, and loving it duly and wisely, is to cultivate an intimate friendship and affection towards those who are immediately about us. The ancients thought so much of friendship that they made it a *virtue*. In a Christian view it is not quite this ; but it is often accidentally a special *test* of our virtue. Little children, let us love one another, is the subject of thought which to-day's festival brings before us. Let us be meek and gentle ; let us think before we speak ; let us try and improve our talents in private life ; let us do good, not hoping for a return, and avoiding all display before man. Well may we be thus exhorted at this season, when we have so lately partaken together the blessed Sacrament which binds us to mutual love, and gives us strength to practise it. Let us not forget that we are not our own, we are bought with the Blood of Christ. May we live worthy of our calling, and realize in our own persons the Church's prayers and professions for us ; and—

When Christ His marriage feast shall make,
May we with joy true delights partake,
And never the blest company forsake
Of His elect.

The Innocents' Day.

These were redeemed from among men, being the first-fruits unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God.

REVELATION xiv. 4, 5.

“VERILY I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.” In order to remind us of this our Saviour’s judgment, the Church, like a careful teacher, calls us back year by year upon this day from the bustle and fever of the world. She takes advantage of the Massacre of the Innocents to bring before us a truth which else we might think little of, to sober our wishes and hopes of this world, our high ambitious thoughts, or our anxious fears, jealousies, and cares by the picture of the purity, peace, and contentment which are the characteristics of little children; and independently of the benefit thus accruing to us, it is surely right and meet thus to celebrate the death of the Holy Innocents, for it was a blessed one. To be brought near to Christ, and to suffer for Christ, is surely an unspeakable privilege; to suffer anyhow, even unconsciously. Surely this massacre had in it the nature of a sacrament; it was a pledge of the love of the Son of God towards those who were included in it. Let us take these little children as in some sense Martyrs, and see what instruction we may gain from the pattern of their innocence.

May all (they) taught us in our hearts abide,
And there make music sweet,
Till we through tribulation purified,
Rest with (them) at Christ’s Feet.

Fourth Day after Christmas.

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus : Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God : but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men.
PHILIPPIANS ii. 5-7.

"HE emptied Himself" (such is the full force of the amazing word for which we read, "He made Himself of no reputation"). Christmas is the especial festival of humility as of joy, a lowly joy, a joy of the lowly. Our Lord from the manger, where for our sakes He deigned to lie, preacheth to us humility. This is the beginning and end of His teaching. He taught it in action now by His Birth. Year by year He sets Himself before us, a little Child in great humility, and bids us become like Him, that when He appears again in His glorious Majesty, we may again be made like Him. Year by year, through His holy Nativity, He calleth us to behold Him, and crieth by His very speechless Infancy, "Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls." "The Master," says a holy Father, "the Son of God, the Wisdom of God, through Whom all things were made, preacheth. He calleth the human race and saith, 'Learn of Me'! 'how I created heaven and earth? how all things were in Me before they were?' No; but, 'I am meek and lowly of heart.'" **Cling, then, fast to humility, shrink from station, advancement, honour, praise, prosperity, if thou mayest, and whatever else may hinder it. If thou must have any of these, humble thyself yet more in private.**

Ask only for a holy heart
And a submissive will,
To bear thy cross, to do thy part,
To trust Me and be still.

Fifth Day after Christmas.

Emmanuel, God with us. S. MATTHEW i. 23.

How different is this earth since it has been printed by the Feet of Him Who came from heaven to save His people from their sins ! It was like one vast scene of desolateness and disappointment. It is now a place where God's elect and ransomed children are trained up for glory and immortality. Curse and death only were written upon all its fairest things. It is now full also of recollections of mercy ; and its very dust in which the Saints sleep, and from which Christ has risen as the first-fruits of the great harvest, has become the birthplace of Eternal Life. Such, then, is the twofold force of the title Emmanuel, "God" in Himself, but with us and such as we ; not "with us" merely by mercy, or care, or providence, or protection, but "with us" as one of us ; not *doing* only great things for us, but taking our nature on Him, and therein suffering for us, and with us ; not restoring us by His word, as He created us, but by becoming as one of us ; not by raising us by the hand when fallen, but Himself humbling Himself to us ; Himself sinking to us, that He might rise with us ; might ascend to His Father, girt round with us, placing at God's Right Hand, united with Himself, and as part of Himself, the nature which He has redeemed.

To know the Christ of God,
The Everlasting Son ;
To know what He on earth
For guilty man has done :
This is the first and last
Of all that's true and wise ;
The circle that contains all light
Beneath, above, the skies.
Father, unseal my eyes,
Unveil my veiled heart,
Reveal this Christ to me.

Sixth Day after Christmas.

Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life. S. JOHN viii. 12.

O THEN, if we have been sometimes darkness, seek we now to be light in the Lord, a light which shall guide our feet into the way of peace. In that light we could not endure any remaining darkness in ourselves. One spot of this world's darkness would mar the beauty and glory of heaven. Seek we, then, out this night, if as yet we have not, by the light of His Word and His own enlightening Spirit, some dark spot, some corner of our heart, that it may receive His light. Let us not in anything be of those who "hate the light, and come not into the light, lest their deeds should be reproved." Shrink we not back from any pain it may cost us to admit that "burning and shining light" into our hearts, sore as it may be to see our own darkness, which may be felt, our own vileness, and filthiness, and deformity, and how in that light our very light becomes darkness.

Christ, Whose glory fills the skies,
Christ, the true, the only Light,
Sun of Righteousness, arise,
Triumph o'er the shades of night;
Dayspring from on high, be near;
Day-star, in my heart appear.

Visit then this soul of mine;
Pierce the gloom of sin and grief;
Fill me, Radiancy Divine;
Scatter all my unbelief;
More and more Thyself display,
Shining to the perfect day.

New Year's Day.—The Circumcision.

Not as I will, but as Thou wilt. S. MATTHEW xxvi. 39.

SELF-WILL is the antagonist of the will of God, for thou wert formed for God.

Be this our watchword, for this year, for the Church, for those we love, for our own souls. Be this our rule in action, "Not what I will, but what Thou;" this in suffering, "Not what I, but what Thou." This shall hallow our hopes; this shall hush our fears; this shall ward off disquiet; this shall still our displeasure; this shall preserve our peace; this shall calm anxieties; this (if so it must be) shall soothe our heartaches; this shall give repose to our weariness; this, the deeper our trouble, shall be the deeper foretaste of everlasting peace and rest. For it shall "transfuse our will into His supreme good pleasure," and we shall be "the friends of God;" for friends have but one will: yea, we shall be changed into "one spirit with Him, sinking our own bounded will in His, receiving into ourselves His almighty will."

Whate'er my God ordains is right,
His will is ever just;
Howe'er He order now my cause,
I will be still and trust.
He is my God;
Though dark my road,
He holds me that I shall not fall,
Wherefore to Him I leave it all.

Whate'er my God ordains is right,
Here will I take my stand;
Though sorrow, need, or death make earth
For me a desert land,
My Father's care
Is round me there,
He holds me that I shall not fall,
And so to Him I leave it all.

Second Day of January.

Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it. PSALM lxxx. 10.

As is the longing so is the gift. The wider the mouth of the soul is opened by thirsting desire for God, the more largely will He fill it. Our capacity to receive Him is our longing for Him. The greater the hunger of the soul after righteousness, the more will He feed and satisfy it Who is our righteousness. And so whenever God would draw near to man, He would have man prepare for that awful nearness. We cannot on the instant change our whole tone of mind. We cannot at one moment care for earth, the next heaven ; at one love the creature for itself, the next the Creator for Himself ; at one love vanity, at the next eternity. Nature itself tells us that we cannot pass suddenly from one to another. If we have heavy news to convey, we try to prepare the mind, that they burst not at once upon it. Sudden joy has often taken away life or reason.

How hast Thou set around me every good,
That it might lead to Thee ! yea, in all
It is Thyself that hast around me stood,
In all I hear Thee speak, I hear Thy call
Bidding me seek again a Father's hall ;
To walk the waves to Thee amid the gloom : -
O hold me by Thy Hand, for if I fall
I fall for ever—unto Thee I come,
Thou art Thyself alone our everlasting home.

Thou art Thyself alone the living Way,
Which in our darkness grows more manifest
And brightens unto Thee the perfect day ;
O lead a wandering exile to Thy Breast !
O let a troubled heart in Thee find rest !
Thou didst behold me ere I yet was born ;
My infant cries were unto Thee address,
And taught by Thee : Thy rays did then adorn
A dewdrop in the light of never-ending morn.

Third Day of January:

We have the mind of Christ. I CORINTHIANS ii. 16.

WE know that to understand any deeper thoughts of man, there must be what we call a "kindred spirit," in him who hears them. We understand that Plato may have understood the deeper thoughts of his master Socrates better than the practical common-sense mind of Xenophon. It is a common complaint of more thoughtful youth that those around them do not understand them. If any have been more gifted than others to understand their thoughts, they have known that it has been through a secret sympathy of soul. Even so we understand the mind of God by having ourselves, through the gift of God, something of the mind of God; as S. Paul says, "We have the mind of Christ." "To love man, we must know him; to know God, we must love Him."

Jesus, Thou needest me,
Even me, Thou Light Divine;
O Son of God, Thou needest me,
Thou needest sins like mine.

Thy fulness needs my want,
Thy wealth my poverty;
Thy healing skill my sickness needs,
Thy joy my misery.

Earth, with its vales and hills,
Needeth the daily sun;
This daily sun of ours, it needs
An earth to shine upon.

This evil froward soul
Needeth a love like Thine;
A love like Thine, O loving Christ,
Needeth a soul like mine.

It was Thy need of me
That brought Thee from above;
It is my need of Thee, O Lord,
That draws me to Thy love.

Fourth Day of January.

Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father Which is in heaven is perfect. S. MATTHEW v. 48.

THE truth is, the aim and standard God sets before us is a very, very high one ; and this in order that we may never be contented with ourselves, never sit down and rest satisfied, never think we have “already attained,” or are “already perfect,” but be always striving on, always pressing forward, always climbing higher, yes, and always feeling with humility how far we still are from the point we aim at. And is not the Christian’s aim a high one ? To be “perfect” as God our Father is perfect, to be like the sinless Son of God, to love God with *all* our hearts, to “grow up into Him in all things Which is the Head, even Christ,” to be “spiritually minded” and to walk in the Spirit, to be “dead unto sin” and alive “unto God,” to have our “life hid with Christ in God,” to “set our affection on things above,” “to grow in grace,” to “do *all*” things “to the glory of God,”—these are some only of the many passages which teach us what our aim must be. Is this a *low* aim ? Then—

Waste not thy life in idle dreams
Of what that life should be,
But live it—use it,—for it teems
With tasks for thee and me.

Talk—it is easy,—dreams are sloth,
Mere wishes idler still,
Thy heart and hand, God wants them both
To love and do His will.

Then rise, and in His strengthening might
The narrow path pursue,
There wait, or watch, or rest, or fight,
Whate’er is duty do.

Eve of the Epiphany.

Lord, increase our faith. S. LUKE xvii. 5.

"WANT of faith" blights and kills every spiritual act. There is no daily abiding sense of spiritual things, no constant realizing of the unseen world, no vivid practical consciousness of anything beyond what the body's eye and ear can see and hear. Faith must be won in hours of secret prayer and meditation. It is in secret prayer, when we have entered into our closet and shut the door, and are speaking to our Father Which is in secret, it is then that we learn our great lesson of faith; it is then that we can most effectually shut out the things temporal, and place ourselves in the very presence of the things eternal. It is in such an hour that we can best understand the power of prayer. We feel we are speaking from our heart to God. We cast off all deceit and pretences. Alone with God, we *must* (if we know we are so) be honest and sincere.

The prayer that flows from hearts sincere
Is pleasing to the Lord above;
While empty words offend His Ear,
And His almighty vengeance move.

To walk as children of the day,
To mark the precepts' holy light,
To wage the warfare, watch and pray,
Show who are pleasing in His sight.

Not words alone it cost the Lord
To purchase pardon for His own,
Nor will a soul by grace restored
Return the Saviour words alone.

To us then, gracious Lord, impart
A living faith that works by love,
A faith that purifies the heart,
And makes us meet for joys above.

The Epiphany.

Where is He that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen His star in the east, and are come to worship Him. S. MATTHEW ii. 2.

THESE "wise men from the east," the first-fruits unto God from the Gentiles, are intended to be patterns to us. In thoughtfulness of what God has called our attention to. Had they stupidly gazed on the star without reflecting on the purpose of its appearance, what would they have been the better for God's sending it? and how shall we be the better for having been baptized, and otherwise called to a knowledge of Christ, unless we reflect on the meaning of our baptism, and the real purposes of our Saviour's coming? In the promptness in which they acted on their convictions. In their joy and thankfulness on finding the Saviour. The character of God's true servants is, that "having not seen their Saviour, they love Him; believing in Him, though they see Him not, they rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." We should imitate them in the fervour of their adoration. They offer unto Him of their best and own Him also in all His offices. Gold was offered to acknowledge Him as King; frankincense, as God; myrrh to intimate that, though God and King, He was to die. Let us then present ourselves, our souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy, and lively sacrifice unto Him! adoring Him as God, obeying Him as King, and trusting for acceptance only to the merits of His precious death as the propitiation for our sins. His grace must prevent us; but we must follow whithersoever it may lead, diligently endeavouring to work the work of God.

They give their best; O tenfold shame
On us, their fallen progeny,
Who sacrifice the blind and lame,
Who will not wake or fast with Thee!

First Sunday after Epiphany.

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. ROMANS xii. 1.

AFTER the pattern of the Holy Child obedient to the law, we, in obedience to the law of Christ, the true Lamb of God, Christ our Passover, Who is sacrificed for us, are called upon to present ourselves, not as the slain animals of old, but a "living" sacrifice, *i.e.* the offering of our whole lives; "holy," free from sin, as the lamb of old without spot or blemish; "acceptable to God," for of those former sacrifices it is said that they were not acceptable: "Sacrifice and meat-offering Thou wouldest not, but mine ear hast Thou opened." I will praise the Name of God, this shall please the Lord better than an ox or bullock. And this is our "reasonable service," that is, the true worship of the rational soul, as distinguished from the carnal ordinances of the Jews. Endeavour to offer up everything, make acts of willing acceptance. Let your soul lie before Him ready to be despoiled of one thing after another as He may see fit, for the perfection of sacrifice lies in self-surrender.

Holy offerings rich and rare,
Offerings of praise and prayer!
Purer life and purpose high,
Clasped hands and lifted eye;
Lowly acts of adoration
To the God of our salvation;
On His altar laid we leave them,
Christ, present them; God, receive them.

Homage of each humble heart,
Ere we from Thy house part,
Worship fervent, deep and high,
Adoration! ecstasy!
All that childlike love can render
Of devotion true and tender,
On Thine altar laid we leave them,
Christ, present them; God, receive them.

Monday after Epiphany.

Be not high-minded. ROMANS xi. 20.

“FOR as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office ; so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.” S. Paul uses the same figure to the Corinthians as the great remedy for pride ; and S. Chrysostom thus explains it : “Why dost thou think highly of thyself? Are we not all one body, both great and small? Why dost thou separate thyself and put thy brother to shame? For as he is a member of thee, so thou art of him.” Humility becomes lost in love, let no one think highly of himself, for we are all members one of another ; and then brotherly love itself is lost in the love of God : “For we are all one body, and that body is Christ.” Thus in Christ must all Christian teaching begin and end ; He Himself the true Passover, and the Lamb that is offered ; in Him is our reasonable service and filial obedience. He is the New Man to Whom we are to be transformed day by day by the renewing of our mind. It is as part of His body, as limbs and members of Him, that we are to learn humility and love to one another ; it is in Him we are to be about our Father’s business and in His house. He is Himself that little Child according to Whose pattern we are to humble ourselves.

Hast thou ever seen the ivy
Creeping up the giant tree?
O thou weary, trembling Christian,
Doth it nothing teach to thee?

Ah ! poor Christian, like the ivy,
In another’s strength be strong ;
Lean on Jesus, He will bear thee
Safely to thy home ere long.

Tuesday after Epiphany.

He that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger ; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve. I am among you as he that serveth. S. LUKE xxii. 26, 27.

HIDDEN, indeed, are the Saints of God. After the pattern of our blessed Lord Himself, God willed that little should be known of those who are nearest to Him. The first step on the heavenly road is humility. Our Lord first descended, then ascended. First He came down and took our nature ; then He descended lower to the shame of the Cross, and so He placed our nature at the right hand of God. We fell through pride, lifting up ourselves to "be as God ;" we must rise by humility, lowering ourselves that God may raise us up. One law there is. Wouldest thou become great in God's eyes, be little in thine own. Wouldest thou enter the kingdom of heaven, "thou must be converted," our Lord says, "and become a little child." Wouldest thou be exalted there, and have there more of the sight of God and the love of God and the fulness of God, "take the lowest place here." Humility is the beginning of all solid good and of every grace. It opens the heart for them, and guards them where God has given them. Humility scoops away the barren sand of our self-conceit, that so our foundation may rest solidly upon the Rock which is Christ.

Rock of ages, strong and sure,
Keep Thy Church in Thee secure ;
Often tempted, often tried,
Steadfast may we still abide.

Lord, we fain would be Thine own,
Fain would follow Thee alone ;
In Thy true religion we
Long to live unchangingly.

Wednesday after Epiphany.

But I am a worm, and no man. PSALM xxii. 6.

OF humility there are many steps. Lay the first solidly, God will lead thee onward. Know seriously, truly, sincerely, thine own nothingness. Many will confess in words their nothingness; they are miserable sinners. It is true and right. We are all. We confess it daily; and we must not confess mere words. It is one thing to own that we are all by nature sinners; very different is it to be ready to own, and that others should believe, that thou thyself art a sinner. But were it not for pride, we should grieve for, not be annoyed by, our own failures or infirmities, from which man in this imperfect state can scarcely be free. It is to rob God to take anything to ourselves, any strength, any gifts of body or mind. What is thy body? "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." How then shall "earth and ashes" be "proud"? What is thy mind? The gift of God, of which He can deprive thee. What is thy soul? Precious indeed above all price, since it is the price of the Blood of Christ! If it is in grace, beautiful above all created beauty, since it partakes of the brightness and glory and image of God!

What man is he that boasts of fleshly might,
And vain assurance of mortality,
Which all so soon as it doth come to fight
Against spiritual foes, yields by and by,
Or from the field most cowardly doth fly?
Ne let the man ascribe it to his skill,
That through grace hath gained victory.
If any strength we have, it is to ill,
But all the good is God's, the power and eke the will.

Thursday after Epiphany.

For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God. GALATIANS vi. 15, 16.

WHAT our Lord came above all things to teach us by His very Being as Man; what He preached in act from His birth in the manger to His death, bared of all and in shame upon the Cross; what He made the first step to His Apostles, who were filled with the Holy Ghost, "to become as little children," must be needful for us. Such rules as the following may be useful, they have been tried: Know thyself; pray God to show thee thyself; bear in God's light to see thyself bared of all outward advantages, what thou thyself hast made thyself, what thou hast been, what thou art. By God's grace the light will never again let thee be proud.

Keep ever present with thee the knowledge of thine own infirmity. Never seek praise, nor speak of any good in thee, except for some good end, nor say what may draw out praise. Yea, rather if it be useful to speak of thine own experiences, it is best mostly to hide in some true way that it is thine own. Do not even blame thyself if it makes others think thee humble. Mistrust thyself in everything, and in the very least things seek, whenever thou canst remember it, the help of God, for—

Thou shalt need a guardianship divine;
Pray, then, that angel-ministry may stand
To gird thy loins, to arm thy feeble hand,
To prompt to holy thoughts, to urge the way
Of lowly duty, when thy thoughts would stray,
To guide thy feet in paths thy Saviour trod,
And lead through blest obedience to thy God.

Friday after Epiphany.

Examine yourselves, prove yourselves. 2 CORINTHIANS xiii. 5.

BE afraid of the praise of others. If there be good in thee, own it, at least in thy heart, to be God's, and think of thy evil and thy sins.

Take patiently any humiliation from others. It is a precious gift of God. "Humiliation is the way to humility, as patience to peace, reading to knowledge." If thou endurest not to be humbled, thou canst not be humble.

In all things humble thyself under the Hand of God. Take all things, through whomsoever they come, from Him.

Do not excuse thyself, if blamed, unless respect or love, or the cause of truth and of God, require it. It is of more value to thee to detect one grain of fault in thyself than to show to another that thou deservest not, as it were, a hundredweight of blame. Be not careful to conceal any ignorance or fault in thee, unless it would hurt another to know that thou hast it. Do willingly humble offices humbly.

Give way to all in all things in which thou mayest. It is but for a short time at the longest. Seek here to be humble with the humble Jesus and He will exalt thee. As thou becomest by His grace lowly here, thou shalt be exalted there. *There* is greatness which none envies, treasures of which thou wilt deprive none, joys in which all will joy with thee. There, not thine own lips or thine own thoughts, but thy Saviour will praise thee.

Angels, thy old friends, there shall greet thee,
Glad at their own home now to meet thee.
All thy good works which went before,
And waited for thee at the door.

Saturday after Epiphany.

God giveth grace to the humble. I S. PETER v. 5.

SEEK humility, and thou wilt find it ; and when thou hast found it, thou wilt love it, and by God's grace wilt not part with it : with it thou shalt not perish. Yea, thou wilt reign for ever with Jesus, Who was humbled for thee, and with the choirs in the heavenly dwellings. For there too thou wilt be humbled, not as now, in the need of all things, but in the possession of all things, in glory, and honour, and power, and beauty, and knowledge, and wisdom, of which we have but the faintest shadow here ; and all from God and in God. For there, if thou attain, thou shalt cast thy crown before the throne, saying, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power ;" and giving back all to God, thou shalt receive all from God in bliss everlasting, through His merits, Who humbled Himself to thee, that thou, being humbled with Him here, shouldest enter into His glory and His joy. There—

All thy old woes shall now smile upon thee,
And thy pains sit bright upon thee ;
All thy sorrows there shall shine,
All thy sufferings be divine.
Tears shall take comfort and turn gems,
And wrongs repent to diadems.

Thou shalt look round about, and see
Thousands of crowned souls throng, to be
Themselves thy crown ; sons of thy vows,
The virgin births with which thy Sovereign Spouse
Made fruitful thy fair soul. Go now,
And with them all about thee bow
To Him.

Second Sunday after Epiphany.

Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching; or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness. Let love be without dissimulation.
ROMANS xii. 6-9.

THE universal law of charity runs into every department and duty of a Christian's life. Charity will measure our Divine instruction to each according as he is able to receive it, not roughly putting forth one truth only of God, but allowing everything to keep its own place. Let every one in the household of God labour to fulfil that duty and service unto which it has pleased God to place him. It is in this that the sacrifice of himself is to be made in the fear of God and in brotherly love. Love, the mother of all these graces, as S. Chrysostom says, let it be genuine. S. John, the great disciple of Divine love, exhorts, "My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth."

He liveth long who liveth well !
All other life is short and vain;
He liveth longest who can tell
Of living most for heavenly gain.

Waste not thy being; back to Him,
Who freely gave it, freely give,
Else is that being but a dream,
'Tis but to *be*, and not to *live*.

Be what thou seemest; live thy creed;
Hold up to earth the torch divine;
Be what thou prayest to be made;
Let the great Master's steps be thine.

Sow love, and taste its fruitage pure;
Sow peace, and reap its harvest bright;
Sow sunbeams on the rock and moor,
And find a harvest-home of light.

Second Monday after Epiphany.

Let love be without dissimulation. ROMANS xii. 9.

"LOVE is a virtue whereby we long to see and enjoy God." It shows itself in outward acts of love to man, or where it may be, in labour for God. But these are only outward forms wherein the inward life puts itself forth. These shall cease in the world to come (for where there is no misery there is no room for works of mercy, nor for labour where all is everlasting rest), but "charity never faileth." It is itself deep within, in the heart, ever there, even when not called to act, like hot glowing coals, which dart forth in a quick consuming flame when fuel is laid upon them, but their deep, pure, white heat is within. Acts of love strengthen the inward fire of love; and love which puts itself not forth in deeds of love, would go out, as a fire without fuel; but they do not first light it. Love is the "fire" which our blessed Lord came to send upon the earth, and would that it would be kindled. He kindled it by His own Death and Passion, "heaping coals of fire upon our heads," to melt us to love. He kindled it by sending His Spirit into our hearts, "a Spirit of burning" to burn out what was defiled, enlighten what was dark, make what was cold to glow, melt what was done, purging away our dross and changing the dull ore into the fine gold.

Spirit of gentle love,
Thou tempest-calming Dove,
Come, and within me dwell,
Come, and all gloom dispel.

O light and lamp Divine,
Upon my midnight shine
Better than star or moon,
Brighter than day's bright noon.

Second Tuesday after Epiphany.

God is Love. I S. JOHN iv. 8.

"LOVE is of God" and is Love. In God, Love is Himself, His very Substance, the very bond of unity of the co-equal Trinity; for "God is Love." In Angels and man, Love is the gift of God, given to man by Him Who is the Gift of God, "shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost Who is given to us." Love giveth love. "God, Who is Love, giveth His Spirit, Who is Love, to pour abroad love into our hearts." Love, then, is the source and end of all good. "It alone," says S. Augustine, "distinguishes the children of God from the children of the devil." Without it, nothing avails; with it, thou hast all things. If it were possible that, without it, thou couldest "have all faith so as to move mountains," the Apostle says, "thou wert nothing." Judas cast out devils, we must suppose; but he was himself a devil. He was nothing, for he had not the life of God; he was but a blot in God's creation. Without Love, all knowledge of Divine things is ignorance; all eloquence, though it were the speech of Angels, a tinkling cymbal, hollow and empty, for it is not filled by God. Without Love, all gifts, yea, to suffer death, if it were possible, for the Name of Jesus, would profit nothing. With Love the cup of cold water given for Jesus' sake, or the two mites, are rich acceptable gifts. The weak things of the world overcome the mighty, since they are filled and strengthened and ensouled by Him Who alone Is and is Love.

Father,
Oh, give me charity, my heart to bind
In love to all mankind;
So let me live, that I in Thee may die,
With Thee to reign on high.

Second Wednesday after Epiphany.

Cleave to that which is good. ROMANS xii. 9.

“LOVE,” says a holy man, “is the beginning of all good, because it is from God, and moves to Him. For love worketh great things where it is; but if it worketh not, it is not love. Love is the means of all good, for it is according to God and fashioneth our deeds aright. For it hath ever the eyes towards God. It is the glue of souls, the union of faithful souls; it is not cold through sloth, nor feigned in action, not fleeting, not rash, not headlong. Love is also the end of all good, for it is for the sake of God, and directeth our works, and bringeth them to the right end. It is the end of sins, because it destroyeth them; the end of commandments, because it perfecteth them: it is the end of all our toils, the end of all ends to us, for our rest is life everlasting, but God is the End in Whom we rest.” God is Love.

Love strong as death, nay, stronger,
Love mightier than the grave,
Broad as the earth, and longer
Than ocean's wildest wave.
This is the love that sought us,
This is the love that bought us,
To gladdest day from saddest night,
From deepest shame to glory bright,
From depths of death to life's fair height,
From darkness to the joy of light,
This is the love that leadeth.

Second Thursday after Epiphany.

Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love ; in honour preferring one another. ROMANS xii. 10.

LOVE gladly suffereth for one whom it loveth. It joys to suffer in proof of its love. Toil ceaseth to be toil ; it is joy when it is to show its love. Love sweetens all bitter things, softens all hard words, smooths all which is toilsome, makes fasting a feast, self-denial for Christ's poor a joy ; labour, rest ; a rest out of God, weariness ; waking early with Christ, refreshment. Bodily pain is hallowed to it by His Cross, and it receives each throb or pang from its loving Father's Hand, as distilling like the dew upon it from that precious cup which He for our sakes gave to His well-beloved Son. Love hath no other will than of what it loves. The very heathen said that "friendship is to will and not to will the same things."

Deep human love loves anything which belongs to what it loves. Love will love a plant, dumb animals, because they belong to the object of its love. How much more, if we love Jesus, must we love all for whom Jesus died ! If we love God, must we not love man, who was made in the image of God, redeemed by His Blood, sanctified by His Spirit, made by His own Hands, remade by Him, and, though weak and wayward and rebellious against Himself, still the object of His love ? How much more when He Whom we would love gave them to us in charge ! "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another, as I have loved you."

'Tis bliss for those whose path must be
Through busy scenes, to feel
How with the evil mingled He,
In meekness, love and zeal.

Second Friday after Epiphany.

Distributing to the necessity of Saints. ROMANS xii. 13.

LOVE to God must overflow in love to man. If we love God more than ourselves, we must deny self for love of our fellow-men whom He loves. Had not the Apostles so loved God, we had been heathen still. This has been the love which has converted nations and spread the knowledge of God. This still seeks out sinners for repentance, teaches the ignorant, is patient with the wayward, bears with the contradictory, tends the young, recalls the wandering, has fellow-feeling with the worst of sinners, thinks nothing hopeless which Christ doth not cut down, unconquered by weariness, unbroken by disappointment, unmoved by ingratitude, for truly all this were we when Christ in long-suffering sought and found us. And hath He not Himself said, "Shouldest thou not have had compassion upon thy fellow-servant, even as I had pity on thee?"

How wisely God hath hedged life's path below,
To keep our erring footsteps lest they wander !
By what we want to teach us what we owe,
By what we owe to make affection fonder :
Assured that we must bid farewell to bliss
Were He extreme to mark what's done amiss.
Our souls, provoked by lesser ills, to such
Should yield the pardon we require so much,
Forbearing others every hour we live,
Seeking forgiveness, called on to forgive.
Forgiveness—purchased and most precious gem
Amid the jewels of God's diadem ;
Yet not too rich here sometimes to be met,
By grace Divine in sainted spirits set.

Second Saturday after Epiphany.

Thou, [Lord,] hast wrought all our works in us. ISAIAH xxvi. 12.

NOTHING so purifies the thoughts, heightens the acts, shuts out self, admits God, as in all things, little or great, to look to Jesus. Look to Him when ye can, as ye begin to act, or converse, or labour; and then desire to speak or to be silent as He would have you; to say this word or leave that unsaid; to do this or leave that undone; to shape your words as if He were present, and He will be present, not in Body but in Spirit, not by your side but in your soul, so that of you too, in your measure, it may be said, "It is not ye who speak, but the Spirit of your Father Which dwelleth in you, He hath wrought all our works in us." Faint not, any who would love Jesus, if you find yourselves yet far short of what He Himself Who is Love saith of the love of Him. Perfect love is heaven. When you are perfected in love, your work on earth is done. There is no short road to heaven or to love. Do what in thee lies by the grace of God, and He will lead thee from strength to strength, and grace to grace, and love to love. Be diligent by His grace to do no wilful sin; for sin wilfully done kills the soul, and casts out of it the love of God. Seek to love nothing out of God. Bring all things, as thou mayest, nigh to God; let not them hurry thee away from Him. Think nothing too little, nothing too low, to do lovingly for the sake of God. "The love of God," says a holy man, "produceth the love of our neighbour and kindleth it; the love of our neighbour winneth the love of God."

O Holy Spirit, guide our feet
Into the path of love,
That we at last our Lord may meet.

Third Sunday after Epiphany.

And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way ; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the self-same hour. S. MATTHEW viii. 13.

THIS heathen centurion drew down by his faith the praises of the Son of God. God hears by delaying to hear. He never hears more deeply than when He delays to hear. He delays only, in order to repay with usury. He delays only, in order to draw out the inmost soul yet deeper longings, that He may satisfy them. He would but increase our hunger and thirst, that He may fill us with Himself. God is not poor and powerless, that He cannot give. But He giveth us as we are able to bear ; He giveth as a tender father giveth to his tender children, He giveth them not *what* will hurt them, giveth them not *as* will hurt them. This is the trial of our faith. Our whole life is a trial of faith.

O comrade bold of toil and pain !
Thy trial how severe,
When severed first by prisoner's chain
From thy loved labour-sphere !

Say, did impatience first impel
The heaven-sent bond to break ?
Or couldst thou bear its hindrance well,
Loitering for Jesu's sake ?

Oh, might we know, for sore we feel
The languor of delay,
When sickness lets our fainter zeal,
Or foes block up our way.

Lord ! Who Thy thousand years dost wait
To work the thousandth part
Of Thy vast plan, for us create
With zeal a patient heart.

Third Monday after Epiphany.

And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer believing, ye shall receive. S. MATTHEW xxi. 22.

THE end of all prayer is to nourish faith and love, that we may trust in God, speak to God, and through speaking to God love God; through trusting in God, be grateful to God. "Often as I speak of prayer," says S. Bernard, "I seem to hear in your hearts some words of human thoughts, which I have often heard from others, and have experienced in my own heart. How is it that, although we never cease from prayer, scarce any of us seem to experience what is the fruit of his prayer?" As we go to prayer, so also we seem to return. No one giveth us anything; we seem to have toiled in vain. What saith the Lord? Judge not according to appearance, judge righteous judgment. What is righteous judgment but the judgment of faith? for "the just shall live by faith." Follow this judgment, not thine own experience; for faith is true, experience deceitful. What, then, is the truth of faith, save what the Son of God Himself promises? "All things whatsoever ye ask in prayer believing, ye shall receive." Let none hold his prayer cheap; He to Whom we pray holdeth it not cheap. Ere it is gone forth out of our mouth, He hath it written in His book. We may hope that He will either give us what we ask or what He knoweth to be more useful to us. We know not what to pray for as we ought. He hath pity on our ignorance, He graciously receiveth prayer; but He giveth not, either what is altogether not good for us or what need not be given us so speedily, yet will not the prayer be without fruit.

By me—in me Thy will be done,
So shall I the glad way of Thy commandments run.

Third Tuesday after Epiphany.

Though ye make many prayers, I will not hear : your hands are full of blood. ISAIAH i. 15.

THE human heart faints through delay ; some prayers God hears, some He hears not. How shall we know whether ours be such prayers as He hears? God hears not the prayer of those who *will* go on in sin. God hears not our prayers if we pray for what will hurt us or will not further our salvation (as when S. Paul prayed for the removal of the thorn in the flesh although He loved him), or if we pray with a double heart ; God hears not self-satisfied prayers, or if we pray with lukewarm hearts, or if we have pleasure in evil thoughts, or cherish anger against another, or secret grudge or hard thoughts and words towards one who has wronged us, God then in mercy hears not, that we seeing in ourselves what hinders our prayers and His grace, may by His grace become such as He will hear.

Then like the leper stand and pray aloof ;
Like the centurion deem thyself unmeet ;
Like her of Canaan bowed to His reproof,
Unworthy of the children's bread to eat ;
Choose like the accepted guest the lowest seat ;
Like the sad publican cast down thine eyes,
And on thy guilty breast in sorrow beat ;
Come as one glad a servant's place to prize,
And as His long-lost son He will to meet thee rise.
Still urge thy quest like that meek Canaanite,
As Bartimæus blind cease not to plead ;
Knock at the door throughout the livelong night
Till He within shall answer all thy need ;
Cry as the widow till the Judge gives heed ;
He hears thy prayer though seeming not to hear,
Counts all the words which from thy heart proceed,
To give thee more according to thy fear,
And when He seems afar 'tis then He is most near.

Third Wednesday after Epiphany.

I will pray. I SAMUEL vii. 5.

PRAY modestly as to the things of this life ; earnestly for what may be helps to your salvation ; intensely for salvation itself, that you may for ever behold God, love God. Cleanse your hearts now, for “the pure in heart shall see God.” Be alone with God that your soul may be free to speak to Him and to hear Him. Be alone in your inmost hearts, shutting out busy anxious thoughts, that they throng not in with thy prayers, and cloud not the thought of God. Practise in life whatever thou prayest for, and God will give it thee more abundantly. Bear patiently and humbly all daily crosses, rebukes, and whatsoever is against thine own will. They will conform thee to the mind of God, be channels of grace which will cleanse thy soul for yet further grace. Deny thyself things earthly, if thou wouldest taste the sweetness of heavenly things. Our Lord teaches us to persevere in prayer. Many begin well. Many hold on for a time well. Many pray well from time to time. Many begin again and again well. Few persevere, for few they be who find the strait gate and narrow way which leadeth unto life. If thou hast begun, pray that thou mayest pray better. If thou hast failed, pray to begin again and to persevere. All who pray to persevere gain what they pray for.

Of what an easy quick access,
My blessed Lord, art Thou ! how suddenly
May our requests Thine Ear invade !
If I but lift mine eyes, my suit is made ;
Thou canst no more not hear than Thou canst die.
I value prayer so. . . .
Wealth, fame, endowments, virtues, all shall go :
I and dear prayer would together dwell,
And quickly gain, for each inch, an ell.

Third Thursday after Epiphany.

He is faithful that promised. HEBREWS x. 23.

CHRIST is more specially present when He is Himself the Priest, Himself the Sacrifice. Himself giveth to us His own Body and Blood. He Himself to Whom we pray, He in heaven, prayeth for us; He presents before the Father the tokens of His Passion in that human nature which for us He took to plead for us. Should He not obtain all things for whom and in whom Christ prayeth? Prayer, in faith, hope, charity, humility, is the voice of God in our secret hearts. It goes up to God; it speaketh to God; it converseth with our Judge; not in our name, but in Christ's. What should hinder it from ascending to the presence of God, to be presented by Him, not for our unworthiness, but for His worthiness Who gave it to us, gives to it the value of His own Blood? God is not as man, that He should change or fail. His promise, which should fail, His Truth or His Mercy, or His Almightyness, or His All-bountifulness, or His Love, which is Himself? All He has pledged to thee, if thou persevere in asking. Thou wilt persevere if thou askest to persevere. Persevere in asking and thou canst not perish; for He is faithful Who hath promised, He also will do it.

They cried in their trouble
To the Lord to save and bless,
And He heard them and redeemed them
Out of all their sore distress :

Comfortably spake He to them,
Made their souls in sorrow melt,
Then up from the desert led them
To the city where He dwelt.
For His mercies still endure,
Ever faithful, ever sure.

Third Friday after Epiphany.

Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. 2 CORINTHIANS xiii. 5.

WHAT is our faith? Would it resist unto blood striving against sin? We cannot tell. The final perseverance of any soul is known only to God. But this assuredly we can tell, whether it entails upon us any daily self-denial and any conflict with the world. "May God give us grace to receive these thoughts into our hearts, and to display the fruit of them in our conduct! What are we but simple dust and ashes, grovellers who are creeping on to heaven, not with any noble sacrifice, but without pain, without trouble, in the midst of worldly blessings? * Well, but He can save, in the humblest path of life and in the most tranquil times." Yes, the form of the Son of God can be seen with the Christian in the quiet path of life as well as in the midst of the furnace; and His presence is in very deed as much needed in the one as in the other, if our walk as well as our conflict is to be as it becomes the Gospel. Let us pray, then, for His presence, that He may be with us as He has been with our brethren who have borne the burden and heat of the day.

Lord, guide our doubtful feet aright,
And keep us in Thy ways;
And, while we turn our vows to prayers,
Turn Thou our prayers to praise.

-
- * (Bend not thy light-desiring eyes below;
There thy own shadow waits upon thee ever,
But raise thy looks to heaven, and lo!
The shadeless sun rewards thy weak endeavour,
Who sees the dark, is dark; but turn towards the light,
And thou becom'st like that which fills thy sight.)

Third Saturday after Epiphany.

I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me. S. JOHN xiv. 6.

THE Way, whereby we are to go ; the Truth, whereunto we are to go ; the Life, wherein we are to abide : the Way, in which there is no error ; the Truth, around which no shadow of falsehood can gather ; the Life, which is incompatible with death. Observe the absoluteness and exclusiveness of the words. Not *a* way, but "*the* Way ;" not *having* truth or a portion of truth, not as ours, partial or error-mingled truth, but "*the* Truth ;" not life-endowed, but "*the* Life." What others, what any created thing, could have only in part, that He held whole and in its entirety. Others may possess truth and life, as communicated by Him : He alone was "the Truth and the Life," having them in Himself, so as from Himself to communicate them, but not as communicated to Him, save as He exists Himself, "very God of very God." "He," says a Father who had deeply meditated on His Being, "He, being very Son, is the Power of the Father and Wisdom and Word, not being all this by participation, nor as coming to Him from without (as in those who partake of Him and are in Him made mighty and reason-endowed) ; but He is the very Wisdom, very Word, and very own Power of the Father, very Sight, very Truth, very Righteousness, very Virtue and express Image and Effulgence."

Come, my Way, my Truth, my Life !
Such a Way, as gives us breath ;
Such a Truth, as ends all strife ;
Such a Life, as killeth death.

Fourth Sunday after Epiphany.

And when He was entered into a ship, His disciples followed Him. S. MATTHEW viii. 23.

OUR Lord, now in the second year of His preaching, on finding the Jews more and more hard-hearted and unbelieving, crosses the lake of Galilee unto those parts of the country which were more among the Gentiles. And this is probably the reason for this passage being selected for this Sunday of Epiphany, as a further manifestation which our Lord made of Himself to us Gentiles. "And, behold, there arose a great tempest in the sea, insomuch that the ship was covered with the waves: but He was asleep." Now this of itself may be a real comfort to us, that a dangerous storm and great distress may happen even to the best of men; such things are no proof that we are deserted of God, or that He is displeased with us. Christ being in the ship with His disciples did not prevent the storm, and this circumstance hallows and ennobles to us such an occurrence in a way that no heathen could have understood, and especially such as occur to the Church, which is indeed that sacred vessel which contains Christ and His people, and is almost always as it were "in jeopardy" and "covered with the waves." And Christ within her is often as it were "asleep," trying our faith and waiting for our prayers.

Come, Tribulation, come! 'tis not in light
A Saviour's face I see;
Cherubic hosts alone can dare that sight
Or the beloved three.
'Tis when Thy shadowy form
Broods in the o'erhanging storm,
That tints of heavenly hue
Amidst the landscape dark I joy to view.

Fourth Monday after Epiphany.

And His disciples came to Him, and awoke Him, saying, Lord, save us: we perish. And He saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? S. MATTHEW viii. 25, 26.

OUR blessed Lord does not reprove His disciples for having recourse to Him in their distress, for that was surely an act of faith in them, but for their being so "fearful;" the greatness of their fears showed the littleness of their faith. Consider in this and like cases what it is which Christ disapproves of. The boat was filled with water; there was every appearance of most imminent danger, and we are not to expect that God will work a miracle to save us. To look upon death as approaching when we see every sign that it is near, cannot be the want of faith here complained of. To be "fearful," to be full of fear and alarm in such danger, is the thing reproved. An entire trust in God, and acquiescence in His gracious will, would teach us to commit ourselves altogether into His hands either for life or death. This is the true courage which faith gives, not a confidence that we shall not die, but a repose in God's will, whether we die or live. For instance, at the time of our Lord's death the disciples failed from this fearfulness and want of faith; they "all forsook Him and fled," and one of them denied Him from this fearfulness; and yet the danger was as great as could be conceived; they could have apprehended nothing so terrible as what was about to occur, that their Lord should be put to death, and such a death—scourged and crucified! And yet if their faith in His Godhead had been great and steadfast they would not have feared, they would not have forsaken or denied Him from fear.

Humbly trusting, humbly plead
The Promises of God!

Fourth Tuesday after Epiphany.

Then He arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea ; and there was a great calm. But the men marvelled, saying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey Him ! S. MATTHEW viii. 26, 27.

AND surely it must have been a very wonderful sight, as much so as was ever beheld by man. There is something very magnificent in the power of the sea, it at once opens the heart to great wonders ; and in the strength also of violent winds there is something which appears to us quite uncontrollable and beyond all resistance ; we naturally connect them both with our ideas of God's power. For one, therefore, who appeared but a moment before to be sleeping as a man, overcome by weariness and exhaustion, to speak with the tongue of man to the sea and the winds as if they were His own creatures, so that while they were contending in their utmost violence and fury, they should hear and obey His voice—this must have been indeed to “see the wonders of the Lord in the deep,” and to behold the human and Divine natures of our blessed Lord.

Saviour of mankind, Man, Emmanuel !
Who sinless died for sin : Who vanquished hell :
The first-fruits of the grave : Whose life did give
Light to our darkness ; in Whose death we live :
Oh strengthen Thou my faith, convert my will,
That mine may Thine obey ; protect me still,
So that the latter death may not devour
My soul sealed with Thy seal. So, in that hour,
When Thou, . . .
A glorious Judge, shall come
To judge the world with justice : by that sign
I may be known, and entertained for Thine.

Fourth Wednesday after Epiphany.

I will deliver My flock. EZEKIEL xxxiv. 10.

WE are not to suppose from our blessed Lord's miracle (which we have been considering the last few days) that He will arise and perform for us the like miraculous deliverance either in such a storm at sea, or in the midst of that raging of men's passions, which like a storm may toss either the ark of Christ's Church in which we are, or our own fortunes, or homes, or lives. But what faith and prayer will teach us from this miracle is this, that Christ is able to do so by His word at once with the greatest ease; and also that in answer to our prayers He will either do so, or else that some time or other He will give us reason to know that He answered our prayers in a higher and better manner than we could have thought of. In short, it will teach us the greatest secret which none but a good man knows, and which he comes to know more and more, viz. that in every danger and extremity, God is both able and willing to aid us beyond all that we can ask or think.

O Thou that sitt'st in heaven and see'st
My deeds without, my thoughts within,
Be Thou my Prince, be Thou my Priest,
Command my soul, and cure my sin :
How bitter my afflictions be
I care not, so I rise to Thee.

What I possess, or what I crave,
Brings no content, great God, to me,
If what I would, or what I have,
Be not possessed and blessed in Thee :
What I enjoy, oh make it mine,
In making me—that have it—Thine.

Fourth Thursday after Epiphany.

The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him ; and He will show them His covenant. PSALM xxv. 14.

Now if thou wishest to live more with and to God, and that God should dwell more in thee, and be thy God, these few brief rules may help thee.

Be with God in thy outward works, refer them to Him, offer them to Him, seek to do them to Him and for Him, and He will be with thee in them, and they shall not hinder but rather invite His presence into thy soul. Collect thyself from time to time in God, whatever thou doest, and thou shalt feel Him to be with thee in all. Seek to see Him in all things, and in all things He will come nigh to thee. Look to Him and not to man, and thou shalt see His good Hand in all evil, His healing Hand in all things painful, His love in all man's unkindness, Himself overruling all evil, giving all good. Then thou must seek His love for His love's sake. Not for the praise of man, not for boastfulness, not to be satisfied with ourselves, not to have high places in His kingdom, not to be above others or thought well of, not even for inward consolations in themselves must we desire the secret love of God. Self, not God, is our end if we seek God for anything except Himself. He loveth not God purely who loveth God for anything but God. Yet only the humble can so love God. The humble only abase themselves the more, the more good God is to them. Empty thyself of thyself if thou wouldst that God should fill thee.

Study the best and highest things that are,
But of thyself an humble thought retain.
Cast down thyself, and only strive to raise
The glory of thy Maker's sacred Name:
Use all thy powers that blessed Power to praise,
Which gives thee power to be, and use the same.

Fourth Friday after Epiphany.

Hast thou heard the secret of the Lord? JOB xv. 8.

BE very jealous, then, how thou speakest of the love of God to thee, or of the love which He giveth. It is "the secret of the Lord." "Thy secret to thyself," it was said of old. God *can*, so to speak, only give Himself to the lowly, because His very gifts would injure one who was lifted up by His gifts. Even S. Paul had "a messenger from Satan to buffet him," lest he should be exalted by the revelations given him. "Let the servant of Christ," says a holy inward man, "who loveth virtues and followeth prayer, have humility; let him show humility in acts, in life, above all in prayers. When this virtue shall have filled, cast down, melted his soul, then shall the heart begin to be enlarged by love irradiated by truth, filled with light, bedewed with exultation, gladdened by sweetness, fed with devotion, upraised by the Spirit, borne out of itself with transports, enfolded in love, gleam with contemplation, encompassed with brightness, enriched with joys ineffable. Hence ariseth the revelation of secrets, the unfolding of Scriptures, the knowledge of things to come, freedom from the senses, inward partaking of heavenly goods cleaving to the Divine Goodness, and the blessed fruition of oneness of Spirit.

Hast thou felt that secret joy that flows
Against the tide of common overthrows?
Or hast thou known the dawns of a God
Upon thee when His love is shed abroad?
Or hast thou heard the sacred harmony
Of a calm conscience echoing in thee
A requiem from above? a sealed peace
Beyond the power of hell, sin, or disease?
Or hast thou tasted that communion
Between a reconciled God and man?
That holy intercourse? those precious smiles?

Fourth Saturday after Epiphany.

He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?
ROMANS viii. 32.

FAINT we not, then, though we have choked our hearts with vanities, or dulled them with the things of sense, or chilled them by unlovingness, or distracted them with cares, or swollen them with pride, nay, or steeped them in the defilements of sin. Mightier is the Blood of Christ to cleanse than our past sins to defile. Mightier the Good Physician to heal than we to wound ourselves. Only yield we ourselves to Him now. The windows of heaven are open, close we up our hearts no more. Empty we our hearts before Him, and He will cleanse them anew with His Spirit; and fill them with the wine of His love. The pledges of His love are before you. God so loveth us that He would make all things channels to us and messengers of His love. Do for His sake deeds of love, and He will give thee His love. Still thyself, thy own cares, thy own thoughts for Him, and He will speak to thy heart. Cast out love of self, and He will give thee Himself. Ask for Himself, and He will take thee into Himself. Cease to do evil, and He will give thee of His good. Truly a secret hidden thing is the love of God, known only to those who seek it, and to them also secret; for "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor heart of man conceived the good things which God hath prepared for them that love Him."

Only, O Lord, in Thy dear love
Fit us for [this] perfect rest above;
And help us, this and every day,
To live more nearly as we pray.

Fifth Sunday after Epiphany.

Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. COLOSSIANS iii. 12-14.

IN the Collect for this week we pray God to keep His "Church and household continually in" His "true religion;" and the Epistle consists of a beautiful exhortation to all the graces of the Christian family, as it thus continues to abound more and more in all goodness and love. For that love which the Epistle inculcates is indeed the remedy, the safeguard, and the light in all our troubles. Nothing can be right without it, nothing can be very wrong while this humble love continues. Love God and love your neighbour, and try to do so more and more, humbling yourself. God is love, and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God. "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one towards another."

Art thou a saint? and doth
Thy God thee own?
Call thee a child, an heir, a chosen one,
One with Himself and His beloved Son,
Heir of His crown?

Hast thou the love of Christ
Thy Saviour known?
The love that passeth knowledge, the rich grace
That stooped to poverty and death, to place
Thee on His throne?

Knowest thou the Christ of God,
His cross and love?
Then art thou severed from this drossy earth,
Linked to the city of thy better birth,
The land above!

Fifth Monday after Epiphany.

And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. COLOSSIANS iii. 14.

ABIDE then in love, and you will find the truth. The Church at large is rent in pieces by the just judgment of God on account of corruption in faith and practice, and it were dishonour to God to suppose that His truth should be found entire in a Church broken and divided in the faith, because corrupt in life. God will be found in the unity of His Church ; but to look for truth and light where righteousness and love are not, were to disparage His holiness. But in this night, this twilight, he that keeps the Divine fire from the altar in his own soul shall have light thereby ; and he who holds fast to this clue of love shall through the labyrinth be guided aright. To keep love alive is our great need, while it is itself the most endangered, and the heavenly torch burns dim because of that air of corruption which is abroad. This, indeed, is a great and peculiar snare amidst the aboundings of false doctrine and rendings of the Church ; for we ought to hate what is evil and to contend against it ; but there is great danger lest this hatred and contention should sour the heart and stifle charity, and so be a scandal to others and ruin to ourselves ; nay more, that we “root up the wheat with the tares in our zeal.”

Bless, Lord, Thy holy Church,
With heavenly graces bless,
That it may flourish and abound
In love and godliness.

The erring and in sin,
All, Lord, who from Thee stray,
Bring them, oh bring them back again
To Thy most holy way !

Fifth Tuesday after Epiphany.

But, brethren, by love serve one another. GALATIANS v. 13.

"PUT on therefore," says S. Paul to the Colossians, "as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies." "Put on," that is, as of something which ye had not before, which is not of nature, the "new commandment" of Christ's love. He had just said, "Put on the new man," and here, "Put on bowels of mercies"—all that human compassion and tenderness which were seen in Christ when He took on Him our nature. The word perhaps alludes to the white clothing put on at baptism. "Put on bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering;" and then applying the same more particularly, "forbearing one another, and forgiving one another; if any man have a quarrel [or matter of complaint] against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye." Literally, it is "graciously accept" him, though you may have cause to blame, as Christ has been gracious to you. "And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness." "Above all these," because there is no need of forbearance and forgiveness and long-suffering where there is love, for it includes it all; or it may be translated, "upon all these," or "in addition to all these," put on charity; in like manner as by S. Peter it is added as the last crown to other graces; and it is the "bond of perfectness," it is the perfect bond which unites together all in Christ. Our Lord in S. Luke's Gospel says, "Be ye merciful, as your Father in heaven is merciful;" and in S. Matthew, "Be ye perfect, as your Father in heaven is perfect;" so that the very "perfectness" of a Christian consists in this compassionate love, for Christ says—

Thou must learn, in loving,
First to follow Me;

Fifth Wednesday after Epiphany.

And let the peace of God rule in your hearts. COLOSSIANS
iii. 15.

LET it "*rule*" is a peculiar word—let it "sit as umpire" or "arbiter" in your hearts to decide upon and moderate all difference. "To the which also," he adds, "ye are called in one body;" this peace holding you all together as one "*body*" is the very object of your calling. So may the love of this life be the prelude of the love in life eternal. Daily, hourly, while we are in church, speaking or listening or praying, we are hasting towards our eternal home. Love with a love which shall not pass away, a love of Christ, from Christ, in Christ, to Christ. Kindle in one another the love of eternity; meditate together on the things of heaven, the glories of heaven, the joy, the peace, the purity of heaven, as "*laying up treasure in heaven.*" The peace of God which passeth all understanding keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

Heavenward doth our journey tend,

Here we roam a pilgrim band,
Yonder is our native land.

Heavenward stretch, my soul, thy wings,
Heavenly nature canst thou claim,
There is nought of earthly things
Worthy to be all thine aim;
Every soul that God inspires
Back to Him, its Source, aspires.

Heavenward doth His Spirit cry,
When I hear Him in His Word,
Showing thus the rest on high,
Where I shall be with my Lord:
When His Word fills all my thoughts,
Oft to heaven my soul is caught.

Fifth Thursday after Epiphany.

Teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. COLOSSIANS iii. 16.

WHATEVER is felt strongly is wont to find expression in melody and song; and if Christ dwells in the heart in all richness of wisdom, then such songs will partake of the same, like overflowing streams from the hidden fountains of God, refreshing, enlivening, fertilizing all around, and making to abound in charity and thanksgiving to the praise of God. For here S. Paul combines the two, brotherly edification and thanksgiving; for he first says, "admonishing one another," and then adds, "singing to the Lord with grace in the heart." It is to God's glory that we are thus to sing, yet we cannot do so without benefiting others with this glad, this angelic service. For thankful love is like the flower, which cannot open its breast to heaven but that at the same time it breathes incense around. Nor in this are we left to ourselves, for the Spirit has Himself supplied us, and laid up in His Church a sacred treasury of "psalms and spiritual songs" rich in all the wisdom of God, full of all mutual admonishing and grace, with which the heart may find utterance with God, on every occasion of thanksgiving, and may ever kindle its own flame anew from the altar. But this voice of melody is not merely such as to break forth in such strains of the tongue, but this clothing of thanksgiving is to cover all the life; this temper to colour all with hues from the heart.

O my dear Lord, guide Thou my course,
And draw me on with Thy sweet force;
Still make me walk, still make me tend
By Thee my Way, to Thee my End.

Fifth Friday after Epiphany.

Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men ; knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance. COLOSSIANS iii. 23, 24.

It will be seen by consulting the context that this precept, and the corresponding one in the Ephesians, have a primary reference to the duties of slaves. The duties of the slave were bound upon him by the most galling necessity, yet the Apostle intimates that even these may be ennobled and sanctified by importing into them a Christian intention. Let the slave look behind and beyond his earthly master, to the gracious and glorious form of the Lord Jesus, Who stands in the background, requiring service from him. Let him yield that service heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men, and it shall be owned, blessed, accepted, rewarded. Now, we cannot but think that there is a deep wisdom in this particular arrangement of the Word of God, by which a precept so universal in its character as that of the consecration of secular duties to the Lord, is connected in the first instance with the business of slaves. No man after this can say, "My duties are so very commonplace, and so very petty, that they cannot have a religious dignity and value ; or so bound upon me by necessity that there can be no spontaneity in rendering them." Your duty, whatever it be, is at least as noble intrinsically as that of the bond-servant of antiquity, and therefore, if the duties of those bond-servants admitted of being done heartily, as to the Lord, much more do yours. Before you go forth to your daily task, establish your mind thoroughly in the truth, that all the lawful and necessary pursuits of the world are so many departments of God's great harvest-field, in which He has called Christians to go forth and labour for Him.

Fifth Saturday after Epiphany.

Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the Name of the Lord Jesus. COLOSSIANS iii. 17.

THE practical life of the Christian comprehends three distinct elements, working, fighting, suffering. We have to do the will of God in our business; this is working. We have to oppose our bosom sin and to resist temptation; this is fighting. We have, finally, to endure with cheerfulness and submission whatever cross the Lord Jesus pleases to lay upon us; this is suffering. And to be right in the practical department of the Christian life is summed up in these three things, to work devoutly, to fight manfully, and to suffer patiently.

Christian life's no bank of roses,
Where we idly sit and sing
Till the gathering evening closes,—
Christian life's an earnest thing.

Full of vows and full of labour,
All our days fresh duties bring,
First to God, and then our neighbour,—
Christian life's an earnest thing.

Onward—ever onward pressing,
Yet untired as angel's wing,
Believing, doing, blest, and blessing,—
Christian life's an earnest thing.

On its wayside none may linger
Undisturbed by sorrow's sting,
Or by judgment's warning finger,—
Christian life's an earnest thing.

Wake then, Christian, from thy slumber,
Evening doth its shadows bring;
Few the hours thy day may number,—
Christian life's an earnest thing.

Septuagesima Sunday.

Be ye also ready : for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh. S. MATTHEW xxiv. 44.

SEPTUAGESIMA begins to arouse us to the race set before us. It is, I have always thought, a marvellous proof of the Church's wisdom that we do not at once go from Epiphany joy to Lent humiliation. We have these days intervening ; days, as they tell us, wherein those who intend to run in that race are to divest themselves, as the racers of old, of every hindrance ; so that when Ash Wednesday shall come, we may be found ready and longing to run in the race set before us. Well, then, whatever may be the separate work of each of you this Lent, remember this, that it may be the means whereby the days of your purification may be accomplished. One cannot but imagine, if, as the general belief of the Church is, your guardian angels foresee what are to be your especial difficulties, trials, temptations for that time, what is the intense interest with which they must see you preparing yourselves for the warfare. There is something very striking, very dear, in carrying out our Lord's own words, "Be ye also ready : for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh." The watchword for all is, quite as much in Septuagesima as in Lent, *Preparation*. Be ye also ready to serve Him with your very best ; ready, if He should call you thence, or hence, home to Him, to say, "I have waited for Thy salvation, O Lord."

In Thee, dear Lord, my pensive soul respires,
Thou art the Fulness of my choice desires ;
Thou art that sacred Spring whose waters burst
In streams to him that seeks with holy thirst.
Thrice happy man, thrice happy thirst to bring
Thy fainting soul to so, so sweet a Spring.

Monday after Septuagesima Sunday.

So run, that ye may obtain. I CORINTHIANS ix. 24.

DURING such a season as this, when we think of the triumphs that have been won and of the reward that remains, is there not the more reason to remember that it is perseverance more than anything else that is crowned? that the prayers of yesterday will not avail for to-day? That the fight of the day must be fought in its day, and fought in that day's strength. And though we do not doubt that God of His infinite grace and loving-kindness will lead you on safely in the same path in which He has set you; that having begun the good work, He will accomplish it; having given you the will, He will also give the strength; it is well to remember that there is such a text, "The first shall be last, and the last first: for many are called, but few chosen." You have each that besetting temptation which was the first to make head against the grace of the Holy Ghost after you had come up from the waters of Baptism; which attacks and teases you most now; which conquers you oftenest now; which will so vex and assault you as long as you are in the flesh. This, then, is the main thing for you to do: to fix upon that, to beat down that, to resolve that if it cannot be rooted out, at least it shall always be cut down. This will be a blessed season for you indeed, if it shall help you to accomplish that. If it be so, you will look back to it with pleasure and with thankfulness, when all—

Work shall be done,
The warfare accomplished,
The victory won.

The soldier lay down
His sword for a harp
And his cross for a crown.

Tuesday after Septuagesima Sunday.

He was a burning and a shining light. S. JOHN v. 35.

OUR Lord, in thus speaking of S. John Baptist, would teach us that the only way in which we can shine so as to be useful to others is by burning, that is, by being spent, ourselves. Burning first, and then shining. We see this in the world around us. The light which a candle gives, how is it brought to pass? By the destruction of the candle itself. It must perish if it is to enlighten. Keep it without thus destroying it, and it is perfectly dark. S. John Baptist prepared himself *for* his work by self-denial and prayer when he was not *in* his work. And that is what we must all feel for ourselves. We are all so apt to think, when we are not engaged in God's active service, that we are doing nothing. You may fancy that living with nothing but a daily round of everyday little duties, you are not at work for God as you wish to be. Never was there a greater mistake. It is this very time, if you use it properly, that will give you strength for more active duties at other times. Only remember, you must be the burning light here also. No help for it. Every one that means to get to heaven must deny himself: you are to try and deny yourselves more and more. Every one who means to get to heaven must be spent: you must look to be more spent. And depend upon it, our true David, the Lord Jesus Christ, will not be less gracious to you if His faithful companions and soldiers than the first David was to his little band of followers.

Blessed reward
Of each faithful endeavour,
Christians with Christ shall be
Soon—and for ever,

Wednesday after Septuagesima Sunday.

As his part is that goeth down to the battle, so shall his part be that tarrieth by the stuff: they shall part alike. And it was so from that day forward, that he made it a statute and an ordinance for Israel unto this day. I SAMUEL xxx. 24, 25.

AND it is indeed a statute and an ordinance for the true Israel, the Church of God, unto this day, that those who work quietly in their everyday duties, waiting till their Lord shall call them to something more active, shall share alike with such as He is already so employing. S. John Baptist was as much a burning light when he was by himself in the wilderness as when he was teaching the people or rebuking Herod. You may be as much burning lights in your home circle as if you were risking your lives in a plague or wearing yourselves out in a hospital. As much *burning* lights, mind; I do not say as *shining*. S. John was not a shining light in the wilderness. The shining is the reward of the burning. It may come, sooner or later, in this world, that we may be blessed with the power of showing that we are able and willing to do God service; but if not, it will come in the next. "They that are wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever." This truth, that we must burn before we can shine, that we must take up our own cross before we can help others, that we must have the trouble and then the comfort, is so necessary to be believed that we can scarcely begin reading the Bible before we find it. In the 1st chapter of Genesis we are told, "The evening and the morning were the first day." Yes, so God has ordered it: the evening must come before the morning, the self-denial before the consolation, the trouble before the joy.

Thursday after Septuagesima Sunday.

Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed. 2 TIMOTHY ii. 15.

IF we mean to do God any service we must be set on fire with love. No kind of offering, nothing that we can do or say for Christ, can be accepted by Him unless it comes from love. "Have we not taught in Thy Name? and in Thy Name cast out devils? and in Thy Name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you." O that we could make this coming Lent a new starting-point in God's service, and say with S. Paul, "This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before." This is the only way to get on in our Christian course, to account what we have already done as nothing; to consider that all still remains to do. It will not always be thus. The race, if we hold on in it, will some day be run; the battle, if we persevere in it, will some day be fought; the prize, if we contend for it, will some day be gained. Man goeth forth to his work and to his labour *till* the evening, but not beyond; that glorious evening which brings rest from labour, and is never followed by night.

Rest comes at length : though life be long and dreary,
The day must dawn and darksome night be past :
All journeys end in welcomes to the weary,
And heaven, the heart's true home, will come at last.

Cheer up, my soul ! faith's moonbeams softly glisten
Upon the breast of life's most troubled sea :
And it will cheer thy drooping heart to listen
To those brave songs which angels mean for thee.

Angels of Jesus,
Angels of light,
Singing to welcome
The pilgrims of the night

Friday after Septuagesima Sunday.

Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. S.
MATTHEW xxviii. 20.

It is this that makes our Christian warfare so glorious a thing. "He shall *establish*," He hath *begun*, a good work in you ; He shall perform it until the day of Christ. And see how the Captain of our salvation Himself was gradually established, was gradually made perfect by suffering, from the sufferings of an infant to those of a man ; from the sufferings shared by His blessed and loving mother to those which He had to bear alone ; from the sufferings of a hard life to those of a fearful death. There is a certain amount of labour, pain, weariness, known only to God, and exactly recorded in His book, which must be gone through, endured, exhausted by the Church before it can be written of her that her warfare is accomplished, her iniquity is pardoned. The more each of us takes, the less we leave for others. As it is written, "Bear ye one another's burdens." A glorious share the great Apostle S. Paul took ; a glorious share the Saints took ; but in whatever we do or bear, we are working in the same cause and to the same end. You know that when the Tzar Kolokol, the king of bells, was being cast at Moscow, every one, poor and rich, cast in what he could ; services of plate, poor little brazen rings, priceless bracelets, worthless kopecks—all went to form the great creature that was to ring out God's praises as never before. So we, if we cannot cast in the gold of martyrdom or the silver of confessorship, at least we may offer the iron of resistance to evil, of firmness in contending for good, and love—

Both friend and foe in all our strife.

Saturday after Septuagesima Sunday.

Thanks be to God Who giveth us the victory. For He is our peace. I CORINTHIANS xv. 57; EPHESIANS ii. 14.

VICTORY and peace, both these you must bring forth from your contact with the world. That peace which no earthly battles can disturb; that peace which reigns serene and deep in the heart during the onset of this world and Satan; and that victory which is the only proof that we are indeed God's servants, that He is with us and we with Him. Victory and peace! these two best gifts of the God of all victory, and the God of all peace, what blessings are they for us miserable sinners to hope for! And yet, clearly, we must have them or we are not finishing the work which He has given us to do! To toil patiently; cheerfully, hopefully, as long as He will have us, and then this to be the reward. There is always something very striking in the title of evening as applied to our eternal rest. We know very well how it is also represented to us as full noon—

There no cloud or passing shadow
Dims the brightness of the air;
Endless noonday, glorious noonday,
From the Sun of suns is there.

But the coolness of the evening after the heat of the sultry summer day; the gorgeousness of the sunset vapours after the colourless clouds of the afternoon; the peace, the serenity, the love, if we may so express it, of the face of nature, they are indeed aptly and rightly taken as the types of the better, that is, the heavenly rest.

Joy of sad hearts,
Bare thought,
Freshen this weary life, while weary life shall be.

Sexagesima Sunday.

In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often. 2 CORINTHIANS xi. 27.

It must be sorrow and trial that bring out the Saints. If the cross here, then the crown there. It matters very little what kind of cross, whether such as the Martyrs bore, in the short agony of hideous pangs, when they went up, like Elijah, by a whirlwind to heaven, or the long patient efforts of the Confessors, doubtless often in the sight of God of as great value. That is a most striking expression in Daniel, where it is said of Antichrist, that "he shall *wear out* the Saints of the Most High." It is just that wearing out which is the glory of the Confessors, both by their external enemies and their own internal traitorous thoughts; it is just that wearing out, too, for deliverance from which all the great mediæval Saints so touchingly long. We must have a share in their afflictions, if only in the perpetual resistance to temptation. Now are we ready to say, as David did, "I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul: there is nothing better for me than that I should speedily escape into the land of the Philistines." But is it better? Let the lifelong struggles of many a Saint answer. Many a life will tell you how such a one was pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that he despaired even of life, by some temptation, even the whole of his course; and they that have been so, have generally been the most tender, the most loving, able to help and to console the best. Think how the Saints of the Most High are thus worn out; one can better enter into that verse, which he that wrote it understands more fully now, though yet not perfectly:

Freed from every stain of evil,
All their carnal wars are done;
For the flesh, made spiritual,
And the soul agree in one.

Monday after Sexagesima Sunday.

One star differeth from another star in glory. I CORINTHIANS XV. 41.

NOT merely in the degree of glory, but in the kind. Just as there is the white, silvery light of Venus, so very different from the full, liquid lustre of Jupiter, or the prismatic sparkling of the day-star. So compare the fiery courage of S. Laurence or S. Vincent, the infinite tenderness of S. Bernard, the courtesy and being made all things to all men of S. Francis de Sales, the asceticism of S. Jerome, the wonderful learning of S. Augustine. Like difference, be sure, among the Saints; like difference of character, of actions, of merit; like difference of reward, as the hymn says:

Though each one's respective merit
Hath respective palm assigned,
Love takes all in his possession,
Where his power hath all combined;
So that all that each possesses
All may share in, unconfined.

And then the order and mutual attraction and responsive motions of those stars; have they not their parallel in the Saints? Has not God raised up exactly the Saint that was needed in the great storms of His Church? When the enemy came in with a flood of blasphemy in the fourth century, was not Athanasius—never to be terrified, never to be fatigued, never till his work was done to be worn out—the very Saint for God's work against the enemies of the Consubstantial Son? When the Church was clothed in purple and fine linen, and faring sumptuously every day, was not S. Francis called forth to say, "Sell all that thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven"? And as the Wise Man says of the stars, so of the Saints too: "They never faint in their watches."

Tuesday after Sexagesima Sunday.

Beloved of God, called to be Saints. ROMANS i. 7.

OUR great business in this world should be to become Saints.

Every single work we take in hand may be a help to the same end. And next to prayer and the blessed Sacrament, I know of no greater means so to advance in spiritual life as these : the more disagreeable any particular task is, to do it the more heartily and thoroughly (just as there is no more likely way of losing progress than the doing it hastily and half-heartedly and unthoroughly); and then the other, to remember that temptation is in itself not an evil. If it may become the greatest of evils, so it may become one of the most blessed of blessings. People are so apt to think that if they are victorious, they have great cause, indeed, to thank God, but that it is only avoiding an evil. No, indeed; it is the having won a great good. You stand on completely different ground before and after a defeated temptation. And see how needful that must be to all who would follow our Lord, and the more needful, the more closely, when He Himself would not begin His public work till He had been tempted by Satan. It is not only the lot of the Saints, but their making.

How little of that road, my soul !
How little hast thou gone !
Take heart and let the thought of God
Allure thee further on.

The freedom from all wilful sin,
The Christian's daily task ;
Oh, these are graces far below
What longing love would ask !

Dole not thy duties out to God,
But let thy hand be free ;
Look long at Jesus, His sweet Blood,
How was it dealt to thee ?

Wednesday after Sexagesima Sunday.

Lead us not into temptation. S. MATTHEW vi. 13.

If temptation is not to be shrunk from as an evil, but to be accepted as a necessity and regarded as a means, though painful yet a divinely appointed and sure means through which by the grace of God we advance into a blissful union with the Divine Life, why are we continually to pray this prayer? and why did our Lord bid us so earnestly "watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation"? It is not the *meeting* temptation of which these words speak, but the being immersed in it; the being so in temptation, so of one mind with it, so to sink in it, so to admit it and dwell in it, as to make sin inevitable; to enter within its ensnaring folds, to suffer ourselves to be led by its attractions, making no effort to put it away or to flee from it. To meet temptation, to be tested by it, is a necessity of our destiny, not a subject for deprecation. We were re-created in order to meet trial and overcome. It is part of the Divine law which ordered the existence of created life, for angels and men alike have been subjected to it. If we view temptation from the point on which we stand in Christ, we can see it to be, not merely the test of our obedience, but also the condition of our progress, the means, the instrument of perfection.

Then keep thy conscience sensitive,
No inward token miss,
And go where grace entices thee;
Perfection lies in this.

Be docile to thy unseen Guide,
Love Him as He loves thee;
Time and obedience are enough,
And thou a Saint shalt be.

Thursday after Sexagesima Sunday.

By temptations. DEUTERONOMY iv. 34.

TEMPTATIONS are around us as the occasions of exercising the renewed will, of putting forth our supernatural energy, of developing some truer purposes or higher resolves, and in such exercise the spiritual stature grows, as without it it would not grow. Trees put forth fresh roots on the side on which the wind blows most violently. There is likewise an inner discipline of the soul, which in an analogous way strengthens it where temptation assaults it, and thus the spiritual growth is matured, every fresh meeting of trial adding a fresh spring of the renewed life. Sometimes an allurements of the flesh arouses a strong effort of self-restraint, sometimes an unexpected hindrance chastens the patient endurance of the will, sometimes a sorrow softens the whole texture of the heart; or again some call to exertion stirs up impulses to put away sloth, or a call to self-sacrifice raises the whole nature above the world, above self; or again a denial of ease, or of praise, brings the soul into special union with our Lord's humility. By such accessions of the power of grace the Divine life in us attains its full proportions and its perfected beauty. There are two conditions for raising our nature into conformity with the Divine Mind, into union with God. One is the indwelling Presence of God infusing the graces and virtues of our Lord's humanity; the other is the exercise of these virtues by trial, as we learn obedience by the things which we suffer.

The perfect way is hard to flesh,
It is not hard to love;
If thou wert sick for love of God,
How swiftly wouldst thou move!

Friday after Sexagesima Sunday.

Trust in the living God. I TIMOTHY iv. 10.

FUNDAMENTAL principles must be laid to heart to prepare us against the force of temptation. One is to recognise our place as a creature. Our Lord exhibited this principle as a main safeguard in temptation. A creature's place, modes of action, and ways of life are dependent. He is to accept each state, to form each design, in dependence on an overruling will, which prescribes his place, his duty, his order of service, his means and exercise of life. To preserve this consciousness of continual dependence, and on each occasion of some seducing thought, some tempting object, to act in this consciousness, is one means of co-operation with the grace of God, Who has promised that He will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able, "but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that we may be able to bear it." Another principle to be firmly apprehended is trust in God for support while temptation lasts, and for relief from its pressure in due time. His word, His will, is all-sufficient, and is the hidden power of all outward means. If some fierce temptation seems to be at hand, cast thyself in prayer upon God,

Who can aid us, Who can break
Teeth of envious foes, and make
Hours of loss and pain succeed,
Guiding safe each duteous deed,

for strength, and in the assurance of that strength grapple with the imagined evil, and then rise up to meet it in a loyal, brave adherence to the Divine promise; and when it comes, wait calmly with the uplifted cross in your hand, on your brow, the image of your Lord crucified in your heart, abide in the firm resolve, sustained by prayer, until it pass. Show thyself a good soldier of Christ Jesus, enduring hardness.

Saturday after Sexagesima Sunday.

He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without walls. PROVERBS xxv. 28.

PRESERVE rule. Rule, regularity, is the sure guard of the powers of holy discipline. Regulate your time, kind of work, times of prayer, times of rest, if possible times of silence, and of speech, and of reading, whether it be serious or lighter study. Keep this rule as a law of conscience. Rule is the enclosure of the sanctuary, hedging in a holy life and strengthening it against the approach of evil. Rule is the watchman, constantly calling you, warning you, bidding you be on your guard, bidding you renew your strength, recalling you when you go astray, nerving you when growing weak, and saving you when ready to give way. One chief strength against temptation lies in keeping far away from the presence of it, or flying if it approach us. Resist the first appearances of temptation.

O utter but the Name of God
Down in your heart of hearts,
And see how from the world at once
All tempting light departs !

We are strong against beginnings, weak against their onward course. It is with temptation as with the gushing out of waters. The first bubbling up from the soil of the infant stream scarcely turns either way ; it may be directed at our will. Let it flow on awhile and the stream has taken its settled course ; the current is sweeping rapidly on, overbearing all resistance in its path. "We are bound," says a holy man, "to lead a life of toil, inasmuch as we are the offspring of our dear Lord's labours and death."

Quinquagesima Sunday.

And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity. I CORINTHIANS xiii. 13.

ON the Sunday before Lent the Church sets before us the subject of charity; it reminds us that all works of repentance can be of no avail unless they begin and end in the love of God. Love must be the law to regulate our whole spiritual life. Where love is there is no anger, no ill-will, no jealousy. In converse with others it hath no false liberality, no dissembling of evil; but at the same time it hath no pleasure in wickedness, in seeing, or hearing, or speaking of it, but with the truth it finds its own joy and sympathy. Charity is full of forbearance, of confidence, of hope, of patience, which it is tempted on no occasion to forego; being, as it were, proof against all things in the armour of God, clothed all over with humility. Faith in Abraham, patience in Job, meekness in Moses, penitential love in David, affectionate gentleness and long-suffering are seen in Joseph; but all these together make up that charity which is the "bond of perfectness," for which we are to labour after the example of Christ. For in S. Paul's language, to "put on Christ" is to "put on charity." Love gives life to all other graces, and crowns all.

Brighter joys and tenderer tears,
Fonder faith, more faithful fears,
Lowlier penitence for sin,
More of Christ our souls within;
Love, which when its life was newer,
Burnt within us, deeper, truer,
Lost too long, while we deplore them,
Jesus plead for—God restore them.

Monday after Quinquagesima Sunday.

Love is strong as death. CANTICLES viii. 6.

THE acuteness of sorrow depends on the sensibilities of love. Sorrow is measured by love. They who love little, know little of the sufferings of the heart. Love implies the drawing of one being to another being with a strong desire of union, and of rest in that union. But this is only one development of the inner sensibilities of the soul. There is also the feeling of benevolence, which is the large all-embracing desire to bless, without any personal emotions such as love denotes. Charity, or benevolence in act, when accompanied with a feeling of tenderness; and compassion, which arises from the excitement of sympathies and common sensations of pain or fear, are terms expressing different features or movements of the same great principle of life, but they do not represent the principle of sensibility itself: they only indicate particular developments of a sense which lies deeper and extends wider than themselves, which is so deep, so wide, that it appears to be identical with life itself, and is indeed strong as life, more precious to life than life is to itself; for love would rather surrender life than life surrender love. This inherent depth of the principle of sensibility in the heart is meant to be expressed when it is said that "love is strong as death." We therefore employ the term love, not as fully representing this inner principle of life, but as expressing one of its tenderest, purest, and most exquisite forms of development. Though inadequate, it is yet the nearest approach to a true representation of the inner vital principle itself, the central fount of the heart's sensibilities. And

Shed'st o'er life a gleam of Paradise,
Lifting the earth to heaven, or bringing down the skies!

Tuesday after Quinquagesima Sunday.

God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. ROMANS v. 8.

THERE are, doubtless, spheres of love beyond the range of our nature, love peculiar to other created natures than ours: there is love in God, which no creature can ever comprehend; but all love of which humanity is capable found its truest, keenest, fullest development and exercise in Christ. If we were to specify one manifestation of humanity in Christ which we should distinguish above others, as pervading all acts and expressions, and coming perpetually forth to view in the most moving forms, we should instance this grace of love. It was the first, the readiest expression of His sacred human life. As the three first sayings from the Cross tell of love in its earliest stages, in the forgiveness of sins and the reknitting of the broken ties of human fellowship in the communion of Saints, even so the last sayings, embracing the ultimate results of the Sacrifice, carry us far away beyond this life, and tell of the blissful union of love in God, of the love between the Father and the Son, and of the love of all His true elect enclosed in their everlasting home, which is the Heart of the ever-blessed Trinity.

But more than willingly He gave
His life our sinful race to save
(That life resumed in realms above)—
This was the triumph of His *love*!
Christ, our bosom's living fire,
The splendour of th' Eternal Sire,
Within the veil of flesh we see
Such as He is the Deity!

Ash Wednesday.

For Christ also hath once suffered. 1 S. PETER iii. 18.

WE learn from our Lord's Passion that love of the highest order attains its highest exercise and truest refinement by suffering pain, by enduring disappointment, by labouring under reproach and misconceptions, by meeting hardness, by patiently waiting the time, by submitting all its actings to an overruling will and the stern laws of a perpetual self-sacrifice. It is not that God ever fails to heed the yearnings of a disinterested love, but that there is something greater than the fulfilment of love's fondest desires, the purification of love through discipline and restraint and pain. Again, we learn that love, disappointed of a vent for its energies in one channel, may find another and a truer exercise in other channels. Our Lord accepted occasions and openings for His love, though not always where He sought them; and we must do likewise. If, for instance, thou canst not be a martyr in a foreign mission, thou canst be a patient bearer of the everyday trials at home. If not possessed of a large fortune, thou canst always speak kind words, thou canst commit thy aims to God in prayer and wait to find their accomplishment in some wholly unexpected way. Moreover, if all fail, it may be only a failing to the outward sense. The Cross was the fulfilment of a perfect triumph through utter loss. Canst thou tell, thou who mournest over some disappointed scheme on which love has fastened its desire, what far greater gain of pure spiritual love and union with God may be the result of that sore trial; how a truer, higher, and more blessed energy of heart, even here, may be found through the very loss of all? Then

Come, Tribulation, come!

Thursday after Ash Wednesday.

Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord.
LAMENTATIONS iii. 40.

LOOKING back at the way in which you have met temptation, think what opportunities you have lost ; how you have yielded when you might have stood firm ; how often forfeited your inward peace, and brought self-reproach and defilement when you might have won a glorious crown ; how seldom given yourself to prayer, and the pleading the promises of God ; how often were self-trustful, careless, or rash ; how constantly tending to wilfulness, and in wilfulness falling into the snare, or listened readily to the tempter, and thought not of your Lord and your hope in Him, your vows, your resolutions, when yet a moment's thought, or one ejaculation of prayer, or a look at the Cross, or the re-signing of the Cross upon your brow, one look to heaven, or one renewal of your past resolves would have insured your safety. And think what you might have attained now ; what in purity, in spiritual illumination, in supernatural power ; what in unearthly brightness ; what in the fruitfulness of good works ; what in the favour of God, if you had been faithful.

I come to Thee once more, my God !
No longer will I roam.

O Lord, forgive my sin,
And deign to put within
A calm obedient heart, a patient mind,
That I may murmur not,
Though bitter seem my lot,
For hearts unthankful can no blessing find.

Do Thou, O Lord, with me
As seemeth best to Thee,
For Thou wilt strengthen me to bear the rod.
For this alone I pray,
O cast me not away,
For ever from Thy grace, Thou pitying God.

Friday after Ash Wednesday.

They go from strength to strength, every one of them in Zion appeareth before God. PSALM lxxxiv. 7.

THE future is the special blessing of God to His fallen ones, one of His best gifts to them, enfolding all the possibilities of grace and the powers of the world to come. It offers the fulness of hope in redeeming the misery of the past and winning back the lost crown, bringing again the sun upon the dial on which it has gone down. There is nothing of promised bliss which may not be won by a true faith using all the means of grace which the future opens to the contrite. There is no limit to the promises. The future is the scene in which all the resolutions of a loving faith may embody themselves, in which all energies, hitherto dormant or misspent, may find their sphere of devotion and their rest. Only let the aim be high. Lay hold of the highest possible greatness, to which the callings of God summon you.

In some ways it is easier to maintain a higher than a lower aim. There is a stimulus in the sense of greatness which arouses and enthral's the powers of the soul, while feebler efforts only are stirred at the thought of the lesser object. Energies are put forth at the instance of a great and noble self-devotion, which may remain wholly unknown to the soul, which may be forfeited for ever, because they were never used.

'Tis not enough to save our souls,
To shun the eternal fires ;
The thought of God will rouse the heart
To more sublime desires.

Saturday after Ash Wednesday.

For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance. S. MATTHEW xiii. 12.

ONLY let the aim be definite and clear. Let the will fasten on a few points only. Sometimes one object of spiritual conquest, one only, earnestly and steadfastly held before the soul, has been the commencement of the entire revolution of a life, the starting-point of a continual victory. "To him that hath," *i.e.* that useth whatsoever he hath, "shall be given, and he shall have more abundance." "He that is faithful in a few things, I will make him ruler over many things." Nothing is slight and unimportant on which an exercise of the will has operated. A renewed will is the accumulated result of a successive series of minute details of faithful efforts. The beatitude of the Saints is the matured result of the long course of patient strivings which may have passed wholly unobserved because of their minuteness. One step has followed another in the mysterious progress of daily, hourly acts, each seeming to pass away, as footprints on the sand are obliterated by the advancing tide ; but the end is the vision of God, and the perfection of a nature made one with the mind of God.

Thus did he live his life,
A kind of passive strife,
Upon the God within his heart relying ;
Men left him all alone,
Because he was unknown,
But he heard the angels sing when he was dying.

God judges by a light
Which baffles mortal sight,
And the useless-seeming man the crown hath won :
In His vast world above,
A world of broader love,
God hath some grand employment for His son.

First Sunday in Lent.

Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. S. MATTHEW iv. 1.

THE Apostle doth fitly style our Lord Jesus the Captain, or Leader, of our salvation. He marches, leads all the way, puts on us nothing that He hath not first encountered. Let this be our comfort, that we be not dismayed, we shall meet temptations. Christ went before us in this conflict, and overcame before us and for us; and we likewise, in His strength, shall overcome. Then — when? Look backward. Then — presently after He was baptized, and not simply by the water of Jordan, but by the Spirit from heaven, and was singularly replenished, *full* of the Holy Ghost. Thus shalt thou be sure to be assaulted when thou hast received the greatest enlargements from heaven, either at the blessed Sacrament or in prayer, or in any other way; then look for an onset. This arch-pirate lets the empty ships pass, but lays wait for them when they return richest laden.

My blessed Redeemer and my Lord,
I read my duty in Thy Word;
But in Thy life the law appears,
Drawn out in living characters.

What truth and love Thy bosom fill!
What zeal to do Thy Father's will!
Such zeal, and truth, and love Divine,
I would transcribe, and make them mine.

Cold mountains, and the midnight air,
Witnessed the fervour of Thy prayer;
The desert Thy temptations knew,
Thy conflict and Thy vict'ry too.

Be Thou my pattern; make me bear
More of Thy gracious image here;
Then God, the Judge, shall own my name
Among the followers of the Lamb.

Monday after First Sunday in Lent.

Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. S. MATTHEW iv. 1.

THEN — again look forward. *Then* — when He was to enter on His work, His public ministry. Thus look to be assailed when thou art to engage in any special service. Each according to his place will find this: when he is upon some purpose of honouring God in any particular undertaking or course, and is nearest the performance, then shall the strength of hell be mustered up against him. Now, knowing it to be thus, this ought rather to embolden than discourage us in any such way. This expert enemy knows his interest well, and does not thus bestir himself lightly, but feels that his kingdom is in danger, and that he shall certainly be a loser. Now, as this is incident to every Christian, and particularly, according to the eminency of their service, to ministers of Jesus Christ, they should reinforce themselves in Him; should follow Him on, and apply and employ Him for the victory.

The foe is strong, his venom'd rage I dread,
Yet, O my God, do Thou his wrath restrain;
Shield me in battle, soothe my aching head

In the sharp hour of pain.

But more than this, O give me toiling faith,
Large-hearted love, and zeal unto the death;
Let me not live in vain!

Restore to me the freshness of my youth,
And give me back my soul's keen edge again;
Ah, let my spring return! bright hope and truth,
Shall I not you regain?

No wasted life, my God, shall mine now be,
Hours, days, and years filled up with toil for Thee,
I shall not live in vain!

Tuesday after First Sunday in Lent.

Led by the Spirit. S. MATTHEW iv. 1.

THAT same Spirit that came on Jesus in baptism here leads Him forth to His conflict, not for this alone, to seek it, but leads for such exercise there, wherein it was designed and appointed to meet him. The Spirit in us doth not carry us wilfully seeking of temptations; yea, we pray by His direction Who was thus led, that we may not be *led into temptations*; that is, that we may be so led into them as not to be left to them and foiled in them; but He leads us into those places and employments, when we follow His leading, wherein, by God's disposal, we do meet with temptations. And to be thus led any way whatsoever is safe, and the issue happy, as here it was. That is sweet in all things, to be carried; not to go of ourselves any way, but that of each step it may be said, "Led by the Spirit." "Led to be tempted, on purpose that He might return with the glory of the victory."

'Tis God the Spirit leads,
In paths before unknown,
The work to be performed is ours,
The strength is all His own.

Assisted by His grace,
We still pursue our way,
And hope at last to reach the prize
Secure in endless day.

'Tis He that works to will,
'Tis He that works to do;
His is the power by which we act,
His be the glory too.

Wednesday after First Sunday in Lent.

(Ember Day.)

Into the wilderness. S. MATTHEW iv. 1.

THIS is the field chosen for this duel betwixt the roaring lion of the bottomless pit and the royal Lion of the tribe of Judah. This serpent tempted the first Adam in the garden, and the second Adam in the wilderness, with different success indeed; and ever since both still tempt the posterity of both, in all variety of places and conditions, in several ways suitable. Company and conversation have their temptations; and solitude, even the wilderness, hath its own. No place or estate on earth is privileged; no business, not lawful labouring, eating and drinking, yea, not fasting and praying; yea, in these are readily the most assaults, but in them likewise the sweetest victory, till at last—

The righteous, upward soaring,
To the heavenly land shall go,
'Midst the cohorts of the Angels,
Where is joy for evermo:

To Jerusalem exulting
They with shouts shall enter in,
That true "sight of peace" and glory
That sets free from grief and sin.

Christ shall they behold for ever
Seated at the Father's Hand,
As in beatific vision
His elect before Him stand.

Wherefore, man, while yet thou mayest
From the dragon's malice fly,
Give thy bread to feed the hungry,
If thou seek'st to win the sky:

Let thy loins be straitly girded,
Life be pure and heart be right,
At the coming of the Bridegroom,
That thy lamp may glitter bright.

Thursday after First Sunday in Lent.

And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He was afterward an hungred. And [then] the tempter came to Him.
S. MATTHEW iv. 2, 3.

THE tempter comes, hateful to every thought of one so holy as the Son of God. How much we learn from every movement of the tempter, and from every action of our Blessed Lord ! It is worth remark that the devil came to Christ when He was hungry ; he seized on the weakest moment of His Flesh, when He was least able as a man to withstand his attacks. The forty days' fast had worn out His frame, and He was feeble, and, as a man, powerless. How exactly, then, do we see from this that our Lord was tempted like as we are. Satan attacks us in our weakest moments ; he assaults us when the body is feeble, and consequently the spirit oppressed. Lord,

Give strong and cheerful hearts to stand
Undaunted in the wars
That Satan's fierce and mighty band
Is waging with Thy cause.
Help us to fight as warriors brave,
That we may conquer in the field,
And not one Christian man may yield
His soul to sin a slave.

Order according to Thy mind
Our life from day to day,
And when this life must be resigned
And death has seized his prey,
When all our days have fled by,
Help us to die with fearless spirit,
And let us after death inherit
Eternal life on high.

Friday after First Sunday in Lent.

(Ember Day.)

[*Christ*] was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. HEBREWS iv. 15.

NOT only did Satan attack Christ in the weakest moment, but on the *weakest point*. There was but one weak point which Jesus had open to the assaults of the evil one. His human nature, His feeble Body, His feelings as a man—and in this Satan seized Him. He could not sin; He had no inward inclination to do what Satan suggested; but He was subject to the weakness of a wornout frame; here the tempter touched Him. O how exactly was Christ in this point tempted like as we are! Does not Satan attack us in our weakest point? How he suits his mode of temptation to the disposition of the victim! Are you vain? In how dazzling a lustre will he place the pleasures of this poor world before you! Are you jealous? In what strong contrasts will he place the kindness of the person you love towards another than you! Are you of an ill-temper? How he will make you think everybody hates you, neglects you, despises you, or intends to slight you! Are you indolent? How wearisome will he make the slightest effort for another's good seem in your eyes! Are you too active? How useless will he make the quiet hour of prayer, and thought, and reading seem to you! He tempts us to what our nature is most inclined; he suits his allurements to our inclination. If we are of a quiet temper, he will not tempt us *there*; if we are only ambitious, he will not care to make us jealous; if we are too active, he will not tempt us to be idle. He knows us well; he drives our inclination to its far extreme. There was but one weak point in Christ; that was His human nature, and there he tempted Him.

Saturday after First Sunday in Lent. (Ember Day.)

Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. ROMANS vi. 12.

It is important to remember that there are two parties concerned in temptation—Satan and ourselves. If we had no inclination he would have no power; it is our inward infirmity which gives him the hold within us. We must gradually strive to mortify and weaken self before we must hope to weaken Satan's power.

By the Cross the warrior rises,
By the Cross the foe despises,
Till he gains the heavenly shore.

No self-glorying; the more faith, the less will there be of that. A believer is nothing in himself. All is Christ's, Christ is his all. That treasurer who being called to an account because that out of nothing he had enriched himself suddenly, many thought he would have been puzzled with it; but he, without being much moved, next morning came before the king in an old suit that he wore before he got that office and said, "Sir, this suit on my back is mine, but all the rest is thine." So our old suit is ours, all the *rest Christ's*.

May I be lost in Thy great Majesty,
Myself no more; to have no cherished thing,
No choice, no hope, no sorrow, but in Thee,
My Shepherd, and my Father and my King!
Nothing is good but what in Thee doth spring,
Nothing is good but what in Thee doth end;
O let me hear Thy Voice, let all things bring
Thy Voice to me; whatever Thou dost send
Shall be my welcome guest, shall be my honoured friend.

Whate'er I have is Thine; my hour of death,
And all the days of life, are in Thine Hand;
My endless portion hangs upon Thy Breath,
My hairs by Thee are numbered, and the sand
That forms beneath my feet the eternal strand.

Second Sunday in Lent.

God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.
I THESSALONIANS iv. 7.

IN every action reflect upon *the end*, and in undertaking it consider *why* you do it ; and what you propound *to yourself for a reward* and *to your action as its end*. Begin every action in the Name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost : 1. That we be careful that we do not the action without the permission or warrant of God. 2. That we design it to the glory of God, if not in the direct action, yet at least in its consequence. 3. That it may be so blessed, that what you intend for innocent and holy purposes, may not by any chance or abuse or misunderstanding of men be turned into evil, or made the occasion of sin. Let every action of concernment *be begun with prayer*, that God would not only bless the action, but sanctify your purpose and make an oblation of the action to God ; holy and well-intended actions being the best oblations and presents we can make to God. In the prosecution of the action, renew and re-enkindle your purpose by *short ejaculations*, viz. “Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy Name let all praise be given ;” and consider, Now I am working the work of God : I am His servant, I am in a happy employment, I am doing my Master’s business, I am not at my own disposal. I am using His talents, and all the gain must be His ; for then be sure, as the glory is His, so the reward shall be thine. If thou bringest His goods home with increase, He will make thee ruler over cities. Have a care that, while the altar thus sends up a holy flame, thou dost not suffer the birds to come and carry away the sacrifice ; *that is, let not that which began well, and was intended for God’s glory, decline and end in thy own praise or temporal satisfaction*, or a sin.

Monday after Second Sunday in Lent.

Be clothed with humility. I S. PETER v. 5.

HUMILITY is the great ornament and jewel of Christian religion; that whereby it is distinguished from all the wisdom of the world. "Learn of Me," saith the Saviour, "for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls." Think not of thyself better for anything that happens to thee from without. Humility consists not in railing against thyself, or wearing mean clothes, or going softly and submissively, but in hearty and real evil or mean opinion of thyself. Whatsoever evil thou sayest of thyself, be content that others should think to be true. Love to be concealed and little esteemed; be content to want praise, never being troubled when thou art slighted or undervalued; for thou canst not undervalue thyself.

Humility is the softening shadow before the statue of Excellence,
And lieth lowly on the ground, beloved and lovely as the violet:
Humility is the fair-haired maid that calleth Worth her brother,
The gentle silent nurse that fostereth infant virtues:
Humility bringeth no excuse; she is welcome to God and man;
Her countenance is needful unto all who would prosper in either world;
And the mild light of her sweet face is mirrored in the eyes of her companions,
And straightway stand they accepted, children of penitence and love.

As when the blind man is nigh unto a rose, its sweetness is the herald of its beauty;
So when thou savourest humility, be sure thou art nigh unto merit.

Tuesday after Second Sunday in Lent.

*God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.
Humble yourselves.* I S. PETER v. 5, 6.

OFTEN meditate upon the effects of pride on one side, and humility on the other. First, pride is like a canker, and destroys the beauty of the fairest flowers, the most excellent gifts and graces ; but humility crowns them all. Secondly, that pride is a great hindrance to the perceiving the things of God ; and humility is an excellent preparative and instrument of spiritual wisdom. Thirdly, pride hinders the acceptance of our prayers ; but humility pierceth the clouds, and will not depart till the Most High shall regard them. Fourthly, that humility is but a speaking truth, and all pride is a lie. Fifthly, that humility is the most certain way to real honour, and pride is ever affronted or despised. Sixthly, pride turned an angel into a devil, and humility exalted the Son of God above every name, and placed Him eternally at the Right Hand of His Father. Seventhly, that God resisteth the proud, professing open defiance and hostility against such persons ; but giveth grace to the humble.

O may that mind in us be formed
Which shone so bright in Thee !—
A humble, meek, and lowly mind,
From pride and envy free.

May we to others stoop and learn
To emulate Thy love ;
So shall we bear Thine image here
And share Thy throne above.

Wednesday after Second Sunday in Lent.

Be chaste. TITUS ii. 5.

CHASTITY is that duty which was mystically intended by God in the law of circumcision. It is the circumcision of the heart, the cutting off "all superfluity of naughtiness," and a suppression of all irregular desires in the matter of sensual or carnal pleasure. Chastity is that grace which forbids and restrains all these; keeping the body and soul pure in that state in which it is placed by God. By bearing in mind the baptismal truth that our very bodies are made members of Christ, we are bound on that account to keep pure from all sins which defile the body. We must watch the thoughts of our hearts, and the moment an improper thought arises, we must put it away from us, and offer up a silent prayer to God, and repeat to ourselves some verse of Scripture, such as "Thou God seest me," or, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." We should make an act of faith in our baptism by saying to ourselves, I am baptized into the death of Christ, that I should walk in newness of life; I am a member of Christ, and must not defile His Body; I am dedicated to God, and as a temple dedicated to Him I must cleanse myself from all filthiness of flesh and spirit.

Open thine eyes, my soul, and see
Once more the Light returns to thee :
Look and choose the way
Thou mean'st to travel o'er to-day.

Think on the dangers thou mayst meet,
And always watch thy sliding feet ;
Think where thou once hast fallen before,
And mark the place and fall no more.

Think on the helps thy God bestows,
And cast to steer thy life by those.

Thursday after Second Sunday in Lent.

Cease from anger. PSALM xxxvii. 8.

PRAYER is the great remedy against anger. If a man, to cure his anger, resolves to address himself to God by prayer, it is first necessary that by his own observation and diligence he lay the anger aside before his prayer can be fit to be presented ; and when we so pray, and so endeavour, we have all the blessings of prayer which God hath promised to it, to be our security for success. If anger rises suddenly and violently, first restrain it with consideration, and then let it end in a hearty prayer for him that did the real or seeming injury. The former stops its growth, and the latter quite kills it. Remove from thyself all provocations and incentives to anger. If anger arise in thy breast, instantly seal up thy lips, and let it not go forth, for, like fire when it wants vent, it will suppress itself. Consider the example of the ever-blessed Jesus, Who suffered all the contradiction of sinners.

Yea, ransomed sinner ! wouldst thou know
How often to forgive,
How dearly to embrace thy foe,
Look where thou hop'st to live ;

When thou hast told those isles of light,
And fancied all beyond,
Whatever owns, in depth or height,
Creation's wondrous bond ;

Then in their solemn pageant learn
Sweet mercy's praise to see ;
Their Lord resigned them all, to earn
The bliss of pardoning thee.

Friday after Second Sunday in Lent.

Do justly, love mercy, walk humbly with thy God. MICAH
vi. 8.

THE secret of all success in the heavenly life is utterly to distrust ourselves, and seek in all things, and with all earnestness, the help of God. At the same time let us resolve and strive as if everything depended on ourselves. Let our church-goings be real waitings upon God, and our holy seasons times of real prayer, thought, and penitence. Let us go forth cheerfully, as remembering that it is God's work in which we are engaged.

O it is a weary life !
Full of toils and dangers,
Full of sorrows, full of strife,
We in it but strangers.
O it is a world of woe !
Why should we so love it ?
And prefer life's cares below
To life's joys above it ?

Yet from care we might be free
As the sunshine o'er us,
And the path of life might be
Ever bright before us,
If we could but look beyond
Life, to that life yonder,
If the hearts of earth so fond
Could of heaven grow fonder.

No ! 'tis not a weary life,
Though it hath its dangers,
If we wage the holy strife,
If we live as strangers.
It is not a world of woe
If we do not love it,
But a training heaven below
For the heaven above it.

Saturday after Second Sunday in Lent.

Lean not unto thine own understanding. PROVERBS iii. 5.

It is when we cease to have confidence in ourselves, when all our strength has become weakness, that we cry with S. Peter when sinking in the water, "Save, Lord, or I perish;" that we pass from the self-righteousness of the Pharisee to the meekness of our blessed Saviour, that Saviour Whose strength is made perfect in weakness. If we know anything of our own hearts, we must have discovered that it is often necessary to go out of ourselves, if we would really be "made ready a people prepared for the Lord." Our heart is so deceitful as well as so desperately wicked, that we need the help, counsel, and direction of those whom God has specially set apart for this purpose. There are four things which those who aim at perfection for the most part await for God's grace, namely, that He would put far their sins from them, that He would endow them with virtues, that He would make His operations to be felt within their souls, and that He would manifest Himself to their souls. But for all these you must be content to wait patiently, wait for victory over your evil habits, and be sure that where hard fighting has seemed to fail, steadfast waiting will prevail. Bad habits of long standing need a protracted cure, and are most surely eradicated by slow degrees.

Slay in me the wayward will,
Earthly state and passion kill,
Tear self-love from out my heart
Though it cost me bitter smart.

Kindle, mighty Love, the pyre,
Quick consume me in Thy fire,
Fain were I of self bereft,
Nought but Thee within me left.

Third Sunday in Lent.

Ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord.
EPHESIANS v. 8.

WE see with what subtle corruption our enemy was once destroying us, and we cannot but love what we shall be better the more clearly we discern and loathe what we once were. There is no need of money, of bribery of the hand or work of man, to attain this highest dignity and power. It is the free, gratuitous gift of God. As the sun radiates, the day illuminates, the fountain irrigates, the shower bedews of its own accord spontaneously, so the Spirit of God infuses itself into us. They who live a life of active self-denial, charity, and purity will be ever brought to the knowledge of God; to them He will reveal His mysteries, for they cannot live such a life without the good Spirit of God; and the Spirit of God, being truth and light, will enlighten their minds and lead them into all truth. Since, therefore, God imparts the knowledge of truth to those that obey Him, our Lord teaches us to look to the lives of men to know whether it be the good Spirit that leads them. When the soul, gazing heavenward, has come to know its Maker, it is exalted far above all earthly principality and power, and begins already to be what it believes itself to be. There can be no poverty when the wealth of heaven has once satiated our heart. We speak with God, and God with us. He instructs us, He disposes of us. The house which He enriches none can impoverish; it must abide in living beauty, untarnished honour, undecaying splendour. In God's

Sight no gift has worth
Save a Christ-like life on earth.

Monday after Third Sunday in Lent.

Walk as children of light. EPHESIANS v. 8.

As children we learn of a wider universal call which all of us alike should have. We learn that all of us, of whichever sex, whatever our talents, natural dispositions, condition, education—all of us, we learn, every baptized Christian, will, in the way of God's providence, have a call which will cement our first call into a state of salvation in our baptism with that last call, "Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world," and that this intermediate call is a real call of God. "Walk as children of light." Over and above all the specific duties commanded in the second table, we were taught to profess our belief that there was one comprehensive class of duties enjoined upon each of us: "My duty in that state of life unto which it shall please God to call me." Common, everyday duties, you may think. Yes, and because they are common, everyday, and all-the-day duties, they are just the duties on which our salvation most turns, in which we have most frequent choices of pleasing or displeasing God, and in which men most prepare themselves for that throne in heaven which God in His everlasting mercy destined for them.

Do what thou dost, as if the earth were heaven,
And that thy last day were the Judgment Day.

Tuesday after Third Sunday in Lent.

For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness. EPHESIANS v. 9.

LOVING and rejoicing in all the good thou seest in others ; desiring and seeking after all the good thou canst attain unto thyself ; and being more pleased with the society of godly persons than any other, such as will put thee, and keep thee, most in mind of thy home and the way thither. The most advanced and elevated forms of human character are those in which love and suffering meet and intermingle—love forming in spring of life and determining its actings ; suffering imparting to love its chastening, its depth of tenderness and refinement. Such characters live longest enshrined in the affections and reverence of mankind. Such meeting us in our path, leave the most powerful spell on our minds and hearts. No greatness wins or enthrals us unless love predominate in it. No love ever yet attained true greatness without the sharpness of inward trial and pain. No opposition will drive thee from the truth of God and His ways, which are only good, if thy heart be once glued by love and fastened to them. Yea, thou wilt cleave the closer to it the more thou art persecuted for the truth ; and the more thou sufferest for it, wilt love it the better. The word that is used in marriage of the husband cleaving to the wife, holds true in the soul once married to that which is good ; all violence will be too weak to sever thee. Learn to know what this is that is truly *good* to know, the excellency and sweetness of holiness, and it will be impossible to part thy affection from it.

Go, labour on ; spend, and be spent,
Thy joy to do the Father's will ;
It is the way the Master went,
Should not the servant tread it still?

Wednesday after Third Sunday in Lent.

For the fruit of the Spirit is in all . . . righteousness. EPHESIANS v. 9.

No trouble is too small wherein to see the will of God for thee. Great troubles come but seldom. Daily fretting trials, that is, what of thyself would fret thee, may often in God's Hands conform thee more to His gracious Will. They are the daily touches whereby He traces on thee the likeness of His Divine Will. There is nothing too slight wherein to practise oneness with the will of God. Then shall we be perfect in that will, when we are like children in our Father's arms, carried as He wills, "like the weaned child on its mother's breast," still to our own desires, even when within their very reach. This is attained through God's grace by *daily* use. By *daily* practice in little things are our senses exercised, our limbs nerved, our skill perfected. By daily practice in slight crosses of our own will do we learn the lesson our Lord taught. For the joy that was set before Him He endured the Cross. He was not above human need, or the power of the impulse which is given to the human consciousness by the contemplation of the reward, the glorious recompense of self-sacrifice. Stimulate your supernatural ambition by the same marvellous future of an exalted destiny among the Saints, within the Throne, by the Right Hand of God. Let the end be the one prominent idea, that which presses most vividly on your mind, not the means to it, not the form of the trial, but the result of trial in any appointed shape.

"O Father! not My will, but Thine be done,"
So spake the Son.

Be this our charm, mellowing earth's ruder noise
Of griefs and joys;

Thursday after Third Sunday in Lent.

For the fruit of the Spirit is in all . . . truth ; proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. EPHESIANS v. 9, 10.

THE great test of sincerity is awfully enforced in our Saviour's words, "The light of the body is the eye : if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness !" To know one's own weakness, to know that this weakness involves sin, and yet to shrink from the needful effort, from cutting off the dangerous occasion—what is this but hypocrisy ? To confess one's weakness and the fall it caused, to seek for absolution and peace, and yet no change to follow—what is this but the hypocrite's false anodyne. To be honest with God is, alas ! one of the rarest gifts. There is a subtle dishonesty, which is one of the most frequently besetting sins of the devout. Convictions of sin are not wanting, tears are not wanting, resolutions are not wanting, the vision of righteousness and of judgment is ever present to the mind. What is wanting is the honest dealing with one's own weaknesses and the occasions of our falls. Thou must now learn to have a continual eye inwardly to thy soul and spiritual life. Thou must submit and give thyself up unto the discipline of Jesus, and become His scholar, resigning and compelling thyself altogether to obey Him in all things. Every word thou wilt speak thou must ask leave of Him in thy heart, and ask thyself whether, having so done, it is according to His will and holy example, and with sincere intention to His glory.

Do good, shun evil ; live not thou
As if at death thy being died.

Friday after Third Sunday in Lent.

With cheerfulness. ROMANS xii. 8.

A DEVOTIONAL writer of the present day, in answer to the question, "How are we to overcome temptations?" says, "Cheerfulness is the first thing, cheerfulness is the second, and cheerfulness is the third." It is very true. A faint heart never won anything that was worth winning, least of all a spiritual battle; whereas victories have often been won against fearful odds by some news which have raised the spirits of the troops. Lightness and brightness of heart, and an unfailing elasticity of spirit, must characterize the good soldier of Jesus Christ if he is to break his way to the heavenly country through the serried ranks of his spiritual foes.

What makes the calm and healthful mind
Cheerful alike through every kind
Of trial or distress;
That still on every scene doth throw
A light more soft than vernal glow,
By its own evenness?
Is it the flower of early youth,
The flow of innocence and truth,
That shows so sweetly fair?
Oh, no! the lightest heart I've seen
In the breast of an aged sire hath been,
When life was quenching there!
Is it the spring that health doth give
To cheeks where blooming roses live
With mirth and spirit high?
Then why should yonder suffering maid,
Long time on her restless pallet laid,
Bear up so cheerfully?
It is not youth, it is not health,
Nor flow of life, nor ease of wealth,
Can yield such steadfast joy:
A mind self-ruled by Christian laws
Alone hath that from whence it draws
What nothing can alloy.

Saturday after Third Sunday in Lent.

Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children, . . . proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. EPHESIANS v. 1, 10.

LET us make sure of consecrating to God by prayer, and a good intention, the most considerable duties of the day. Let us strive at all periods, whether of work or refreshment, to realize His presence, and the great end for which we are or ought to be living. We shall find by degrees that the main business of the day, if done with pure intention, will lead the smaller duties in tow, like long-boats following in the wake of a man-of-war. For the rest, let us make a wise and holy use of the efficacy of Christ's Blood and Grace. That doctrine, if *rightly* and *deeply* received, will give the mind a spring of elasticity, of indomitable cheerfulness, courage, and hope. Nothing which we do will for a moment bear the scrutiny of Almighty God as a judge. Be it so ; but our Lord's work *will* endure that scrutiny, and come triumphant out of the ordeal ; and His work is by faith ours as entirely as if we were the doers of it. Our own efforts after sanctity are always breaking down and giving way under us. True ; but in Him doth all fulness dwell ; and out of that fulness will we look to receive grace for grace, so that more and more visibly, if only our wills be true to Him, the lineaments of His blessed Image may be reproduced in us by the power of His Spirit.

Jesus, gentlest Saviour,
Thou art in us now ;
Fill us with Thy goodness
Till our hearts o'erflow.

Multiply our graces,
Chiefly love and fear,
And, dear Lord, the chiefest,
Grace to persevere.

Fourth Sunday in Lent.

Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free. GALATIANS V. 1.

WHAT is this liberty? It is in no sense laxity as opposed to strictness. No epistle contains such a view of the Christian state, as one of strict and severe abnegation of every evil defiling thing, as this; for in it we read that terrible list of the works of the flesh, of which we are assured that they who do such things shall not "inherit the kingdom of God," and, following close upon it, that counter-list of the works of the Spirit, which teaches us so plainly that our religion is to consist in no mere negation of evil, but in the cultivation of every Christian grace. The whole concludes, "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts." What a liberty! A liberty which consists in our having evil lusts crucified! Yes! it is a strange liberty for a worldly, sensual, and godless man! It is a liberty to flee from and resist and conquer sin. It is a liberty to break and to cast away the chains of covetousness, so that we should give liberally and cheerfully. It is liberty to serve God. It is liberty to be disengaged from the world and to cleave to Christ. A liberty from the chains of evil things which imprison the heart, and a freedom which will exalt and expand and ennoble it for ever and ever.

Have I not brought thee from the house of slaves,
Parted the drowning waves,
And set My Saints before thee in the way,
Lest thou shouldst faint or stray?
What! was the promise made to thee alone?
Art thou th' excepted one?
An heir of glory without grief or pain?
O vision false and vain!
There lies thy cross; beneath it meekly bow,
It fits thy stature now;
Who scornful pass it with averted eye,
I will crush them by and by.

Monday after Fourth Sunday in Lent.

Let us not be weary in well-doing. GALATIANS vi. 9.

It is very easy to begin well. It is very easy to make good resolves, to feel warm with zeal and love to God *at times*. But it is very hard to go on well, to fight the long wearisome fight, to labour day by day and hour by hour to serve God, in the midst of all sorts of difficulties and hindrances and worldly thoughts and cares; this is indeed very hard. We are all tempted soon to be "weary in well-doing." And yet what says our Lord Himself? "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." Yes, nothing else will avail. It will be of no use lighting our lamps if they do not burn on to the end. Persevere must be the Christian's watchword. He must never faint nor flag in his march. There must be no idling, no turning back—onward, onward, the path is before him. He must press forward, never daunted, never weary, "steadfast," unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord; faithful "unto death." How can we best persevere and not be weary in well-doing? Only by constant, daily, humble reliance on God's strength. Except we seek God's grace very earnestly and very constantly in those blessed means of grace which He has given us, we cannot hope to persevere. Remember we are not trusting in God's grace and leaning upon His strength unless we are distrusting ourselves. God "giveth grace to the humble." "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life," and he that endureth to the end shall be saved.

May we follow and adore
Thee, our Saviour, more and more :
Guide and bless us with Thy love,
Till we join Thy Saints above.

Tuesday after Fourth Sunday in Lent.

[*Lord,*] *abide with us.* S. LUKE xxiv. 29.

"WITHOUT a friend thou canst not well live ; if Jesus be not above all a Friend to thee, thou shalt be indeed desolate." Listen we then to every whisper of our conscience, "Do this ; do not that ; speak not that word of unkindness or exaggeration ; avoid this or that evil society." It is Jesus Who, within, is speaking to us by His Spirit. Hearken we to every call which rouses us to more diligent service ; to love Him alone, meditate on His Passion, share His Sufferings, by bearing patiently what He lays upon us, by denying ourselves for those for whom, with us, He died. It is Jesus saying to us, "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken : ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory?" S. Bernard says, "If He entered not into His own glory without suffering, think we, without suffering, to enter, not into ours, but into His?"

He speaketh to us, and is with us, in everything by which He would win us back from the world or draw us to Himself. If a deep Scripture word pierces our souls as it never did before, He it is Who is speaking to us. He comes to us in another and another form, while our eyes are holden : in sorrow, in joy ; in fast (as now) or feast ; in humiliation or forgiveness ; in awe of His majesty or the soft whisperings of His mercy. We may know His presence by the deep, breathless stirrings of our hearts. He Who made the heart, He it is Who shaketh it, He it is Who bids us "bestir ourselves ;" for the Lord goeth on before to subdue our enemies before our face. Only, in all we say, think, do, fear, hope, enjoy, let us say, "Abide with us, Lord."

Wednesday after Fourth Sunday in Lent.

Abide with us. S. LUKE xxiv. 29.

WE fear our own unsteadfastness ; " Lord, abide with us." The foe is strong, and we, through our sins, weak ; " Lord, abide with us," and be our Strength. We are ever subject to changes, and ebb and flow ; " Abide with us, Lord," with Whom " is no change." The pleasures of the world would lead us from Thee ; " Abide with us, Lord," and be Thou our joy. The troubles of the world would shake our endurance ; " Abide with us, Lord," and bear them in us, as Thou didst bear them for us. Thou art our Refreshment in weariness ; Thou our Comfort in trouble ; Thou our Refuge in temptation ; Thou in death our Life ; Thou in judgment our Redeemer.

Thy Right Hand be stretched out,
Thy Left be round about,
In every peril that we meet !

And, O good Lord, at last,
Our many wanderings past,
Give us to see Thy realm of light.

From Him can nought my soul divide,
Nor life nor death can part us now ;
I lay my hand upon His Side,
And say, My Lord and God art Thou ;
My God, for Jesu's sake I pray
Thy peace may bless my dying day.

In holy baptism long ago
I joined me to the living Vine.
Thou lovest me in Him, I know,
In Him Thou dost accept me Thine ;
My God, for Jesu's sake I pray
Thy peace may bless my dying day.

And I have eaten of His Flesh
And drank His Blood—nor can I be
Forsaken now, nor doubt afresh,
I am in Him and He in me ;
My God, for Jesu's sake I pray
Thy peace may bless my dying day.

Thursday after Fourth Sunday in Lent.

Forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before. PHILIPPIANS iii. 13.

OFFER up thyself wholly to God, and fix the point of thy love upon His most blessed "increated" love; and there let thy soul and heart rest and delight, and be as it were resolved and melted most happily into the blessed Godhead; and then take that as a token, and be assured by it, that God will grant thy lovely and holy desire. Then shalt thou feel in a manner no difference betwixt honour and shame, joy and sorrow; but whatsoever thou perceivest to appertain to the honour of thy Lord, be it ever so hard and unpleasant to thyself, thou wilt heartily embrace it, yea, with all thy might follow and desire it: yet when thou wilt think thou hast done what is possible for thee, thou wilt think thou hast done nothing at all, yea thou wilt be ashamed and detest thyself, that thou hast so wretchedly and imperfectly served so noble and worthy a Lord; and therefore thou wilt desire and endeavour every hour to do and suffer greater and more perfect things than hitherto thou hast done, forgetting the things that are behind, and pressing forward to those that are before.

As many as the crosses which abound
On every side our road which leads to heaven,
So many tokens of Thy care are found
To wean our fancies unto pleasure given;
To aid Thy Spirit which with ours has striven,
And bring us to the Cross of Thy deep woes.
Here in the twilight of the silent even,
While life's short day to sable darkness goes,
My heart shall fly to Thee and rest in Thy repose.

Friday after Fourth Sunday in Lent.

By patient continuance in well-doing. ROMANS ii. 7.

GOD leads us on step by step. One object of our Lenten fast is a long-continued discipline. We should, none of us, by God's grace go forth out of Lent as we entered it. So solemn a season of stillness, collectedness, subdual of self, will not pass over us without the distilling of His grace, if we seek to gather and store it up within us. Let us so learn to know ourselves and our besetting faults. Seek we in earnest to subdue one. Each fault has some pain accompanying it which will give us notice of its approach. In any case, so soon as the temptation comes, betake thyself to some brief prayer or some thought of God which shall be prayer. Thou wilt know what His might is, for thou wilt know what it is earnestly and with perseverance to desire that His might be put forth in thee and for thee; thou wilt have followed Him, like the blind man on the way, and have cried after Him, and He Who taught thee that cry will hear thee, and say to thee, "Be it unto thee as thou wilt."

Show me the way that leadeth unto Thee :
Though it be difficult, Thou art all might ;
Though low, Thou art of love a boundless sea ;
Though dark, Thou art Thyself the living Light ;
Though toilsome, Thou art goodness infinite ;
And wilt refresh the heavy-laden soul
That comes to Thee.

Saturday after Fourth Sunday in Lent.

This is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. 1 S. PETER ii. 19.

HE who can be content to have God for a witness of his patience and sufferings, has found the secret to make God his friend. We complain of unjust sufferings, and they are the things which we ought most to value. A Christian whose whole care is to avoid sufferings has forgotten his Pattern, and that we are Christians in order to be crucified with Christ. We see in Jesus Christ innocence and holiness itself suffering, and yet we complain of hardships. The meekness of Christ when in the hands of His enemies, and when He had power to have delivered Himself, is what we are always to remember.

Lord, Who hast suffered all for me,
My grace and pardon to procure,
The lighter cross I bear for Thee
Help me with patience to endure.

The storm of loud repining hush ;
Give me, O Lord, submissive faith ;
Nor let me speak of my distress,
Who merit everlasting wrath.

Perhaps some golden wedge suppressed,
Some secret sin, offends my God ;
Perhaps that Babylonish vest,
Self-righteousness, provokes the rod.

Ah ! were I buffeted all day,
Mocked, crowned with thorns, and spit upon,
I yet should have no right to say,
My great distress is mine alone.

Let me not angrily declare
No pain was ever sharp as mine ;
Nor murmur at the cross I bear,
But rather weep, rememb'ring Thine.

Passion Sunday.

Before Abraham was, I am. S. JOHN viii. 58.

OUR Lord declares not only that He was before Abraham, but speaks of His being in the same absolute manner in which the voice out of the bush had spoken to Moses concerning the being of Jehovah, "I am." It was as though He said, I am without beginning and without end, the same from everlasting to everlasting: before Abraham was, My being was the same as now—unchangeable, self-existent. The Godhead of our blessed Saviour is here intimated to us with remarkable plainness; and when the Jews heard these awful words from the lips of One Whose life was so holy, and Whom the Father so plainly honoured by the miracles He was able to work, they ought to have bowed their hearts before Him.

With what reverence we should think of our blessed Saviour, with what holy awe we should draw nigh to Him! When we approach Him, we should conceive ourselves addressed, as Moses was at the bush, "Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground." There are mysteries in His Being, His Godhead and Incarnation, which no created intelligence can fathom, and which are ever to be rather adored in silence. Christ's whole doctrine, every holy rule which He gave for good living, and especially all those sayings of His which direct us to Himself as the Source of spiritual life and health,—are we keeping these sayings in our daily practice? remembering that "if a man keep My saying, he shall never taste of death," but—

At length inherit
Him, my portion ever blest.

Monday in Passion Week.

For I called him alone, and blessed him. ISAIAH li. 2.

FROM the dawning of conversion to the hour of death it is in solitude mostly that God speaks to the soul. Search the Scriptures, says a holy man, and we shall find that scarce ever, or never, did God speak in a multitude; so often as He would have anything known to men, he showed Himself, either to single persons or very few, and those severed from the common throng of men, either in the silence of the night, in the fields, or in deserts. When Jacob fled from Esau, then lonely, with his pilgrim staff, he saw the ladder which reached to heaven, Angels ascending and descending, and was himself the image of Him upon Whom they descended, and as he passed the night alone, the Angel, in whom God was, found him, and by his strength he had power with God; his strength was his faith and tears, wherewith he wept and made supplication unto Him. Why speak of man? Was not our Lord forty days alone with the wild beasts, in fasting and prayer, tempted by Satan, at once to teach us that in solitude also Satan tempts, and yet that loneliness is the presence of God, the means of victory?

All unseen the Master walketh
By the toiling servant's side;
Comfortable words He speaketh,
While His Hands uphold and guide.

Grief, nor pain, nor any sorrow
Bends thy heart, to Him unknown;
He to-day, and He to-morrow,
Grace sufficient gives His own.

Holy strivings nerve and strengthen,
Long endurance wins the crown;
When the evening shadows lengthen
Thou shalt lay thy burden down.

Tuesday in Passion Week.

Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them : because greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world. 1 S. JOHN iv. 4.

GOD is our Master and His will should be the rule of our conduct. Let us offer all we have to God without reserve. Almighty and everlasting God, Who alone workest great marvels, send down upon us the healthful spirit of Thy grace, and that we may truly please Thee pour down upon us the continual dew of Thy blessing. Whosoever walketh unceasingly in the presence of God will be always ready to render Him an account of his actions, and will never lose sight of His love by consenting to sin. Then fight on and fear not ; the more hard the battle, the more sure the victory ; the more terrible the contest, the more sure the help. You will by degrees conquer your lusts and destroy your love for those idols to which too much you have given your heart. Your conflict is the means of gaining much divine peace and comfort. Sweet is the peace the Christian gains through battling with his sins. Your conflict shall increase your faith ; your hope of heaven is brought oftener to your mind, your intercourse with God more frequent. Your conflict shall give you experience in the ways and dealings of God. Though "thou art but a youth, and thine enemy a man of war," as Saul said to David, yet through God you shall do valiantly.

For this Christ comes from the Unseen,
To train us on His strength to lean ;
And mercy's marvels, round Him thrown,
Are but to make His presence known ;
His presence and His power to bless,
When man doth know his helplessness.

Wednesday in Passion Week

Watch. S. MATTHEW xxvi. 41.

PERHAPS you find, after a long and wearisome conflict, your sins do not seem to give way, that you are more inclined to sin than ever, that you are no nearer heaven than when you began. There are many reasons why Christians get so little success over their sins and lusts. Perhaps you watch too little. We must be watching at the camp or our enemy will take us by surprise. You pray perhaps in secret too little. We need much sharpening of our weapons for this warfare. If we spent more time in conversing with God we should oftener wear the palm of victory. Have you faith enough? Too little faith often brings too little victory. Lastly, are you too soon satisfied? is one victory over a sin considered by you enough. This will not do; your battles must go on till your sin goes down. The battle is not over till sunset, then all is peace.

Breast the wave, Christian,
When it is strongest;
Watch for day, Christian,
When night is longest.
Onward and onward still
Be thine endeavour,
The rest that remaineth
Will be for ever.

Fight the fight, Christian,
Jesus is o'er thee;
Run the race, Christian,
Heaven is before thee.
He who hath promised
Faltereth never;
The love of thy Saviour
Flows on for ever.

Thursday in Passion Week.

Thank God. 2 THESSALONIANS i. 3.

PERHAPS God has some reason for preventing your more frequent victory. God often wounds us in the leg that we may not go far from His throne. He sees we can better thrive while here below with war than with victory. Fighting is better than conquering on earth. He leaves us many scorpions and serpents to fight with in the wilderness, that we may look the more to the serpent of brass; the Rock of our strength, the Redeemer, even Christ the Lord. Believer in Jesus, this is your inward strife, this is your agony, in which you are like your suffering Redeemer. Thank God that you are allowed to suffer with Him. Thank God that Christ has passed that strife before you; that He can tell and know your sufferings; that if you are His in the garden agony, His you shall be on the cross, His at the broken sepulchre, His on the mount of Ascension, His when the throne is set for judgment, His in suffering, His in glory; share in His earthly agony, share in His heavenly triumph; His in life, in death, in all things. Pour forth, then, without a doubting thought, into His ear of pity, "By Thine agony and bloody sweat, by Thy Cross and Passion, good Lord, deliver me."

From the devil and his dangers,
From the pomp and pride of life,
Lord, as pilgrims and as strangers,
Keep us in the holy strife.

From all lusts, depraved and fleshly,
Set our struggling spirits free;
Strike the rock, and gushing freshly
All our springs be found in Thee.

Thee, by Whom we heaven inherit,
We for Thee the world forsake,
Called by Thine Almighty Spirit,
And received for Jesu's sake.

Friday in Passion Week.

A friend of . . . sinners. S. MATTHEW xi. 19.

FEW things are more delightful, encouraging, comforting, than Christian intercourse, when we find others suffering from the same trials, the same temptations, difficulties, and drawbacks that we do ourselves. It shows us that we have not been worse than others ; it reminds us of the difficulties which we must expect ; that if they escaped safely through it all, we may surely hope the same ; the same grace to aid us, the same Spirit to guide us, the same Saviour to pardon us, the same God to love us, the same heaven to give us rest. But more especially is this our comfort when the fellow-sufferer is Jesus Christ Himself ; when in our trials, our sufferings, our difficulties, above all in our temptations, He too was like us. Follow Him into all the stages of His earthly career, we find His sympathy still.

Are these the tracks of some unearthly Friend,
His footprints and his vesture-skirts of light,
Who, as I talk with men, conforms aright
Their sympathetic words, or deeds that blend
With my hid thought ; or stoops him to attend
My doubtful-pleading grief ; or blunts the might
Of ill I see not ; or in dreams of night
Figures the scope in which what is will end ?
Were I Christ's own, then fitly might I call
That vision real ; for to the thoughtful mind
That walks with Him, He half unveils His Face ;
But when on earth-stained souls such tokens fall,
These dare not claim as theirs what there they find,
Yet, not all hopeless, eye His boundless grace.

Saturday in Passion Week.

The tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God. REVELATION xxi. 3.

LEARN to commune with Him in stillness, and He Whom thou hast sought in stillness, will be with thee when thou goest abroad. Go not abroad out of thyself, and He will not depart from thee. He cometh not to us to leave us, if we would detain Him with us. Gather thyself from time to time in thyself; recall to thyself, "Whose am I? for whom am I doing this? how would God have me do it?" Lift up thine eyes to the holy "Pattern showed to thee in the mount," even His "Who came not to do His own will, but the will of Him Who sent Him." Thy Redeemer, Who would work all thy works in thee, will gather thee up wholly into Himself, all thy thoughts, words, and deeds, that they be thought, spoken, done in Him. His visitations are seasons of grace. Miss we not, for our own souls, any. So shall joy spring out of sorrow, abundance out of want, comfort out of desolation, hope out of hopelessness, rest out of trouble, life out of death, from brief "afflictions" an "eternal weight of glory." God shall speak to our hearts, and our hearts shall say unto Him, "Thy Face, Lord, will I seek;" and He Himself shall be the strength of our hearts now in this "valley of the shadow of death." Himself, "Who filleth all things," shall, "in the land of the living," and "the brightness of His presence," be our portion for ever.

Shepherd, Thou Thy sheep thus ransomed,
To Thy country lead on high;
Where for ever in fruition
I may see Thee eye to eye.

Palm Sunday.

God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a Name which is above every name: that at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow. PHILIPPIANS ii. 9, 10.

BOWING at the Name of Jesus was the habit of the Church in olden times. "I remember," says Dr. Monsell, "well how, in a country parish I held, the oldest and simplest-minded of the poor bowed their heads whenever the sacred Name was spoken. It is an act of homage to the Name which is above every name, at which every knee should bow. If the Jews hushed their voices and spake not one mysterious name of God, should not Christians be as reverential and cautious in their use of that precious Name they hold so dear? With me it has become, thank God, such a habit that I cannot even write the Name without an almost involuntary reverence. I once had a touching proof of the use of such habits afforded me by the deathbed of a parishioner. My last visit to his room found him, as his nurse thought, insensible. He opened not his eyes when I spoke, nor by the answer of the least pressure acknowledged the taking of his chilled hand in mine. Yet when I knelt and prayed beside him, and at the close of my prayer uttered the sacred Name, even from the pillow his head rose gently to salute it, and thus show that the consciousness of its presence was before him, even in the shadow of death. It was like a monition to me from the confines of another world, ever by my practice and teaching to train those committed to my care in reverence of the Name "

Of wondrous love ;
Name all other names above ;
Name at which must every knee
Bow in deep humility.

Monday in Holy Week.

Christ crucified. I CORINTHIANS I. 23.

WE are now in the Holy Week, the week we have been long looking to, the week in which He died, the only hope of the sinner; the week all have kept holy at every time, and are keeping holy everywhere; the week S. James and S. Timothy kept; the week S. Athanasius and S. Chrysostom kept; the week our own husbands and brethren and children kept who are now in heaven. We will keep it. Oh that we could keep it better than we shall! But God forgive us, we will do our best, and if we fail, poor mariners of a stormy day as we are, He Who excused those poor sleepers in the garden, He Who turned and looked on Peter, He Who bore so long with so many, will forgive it; He knoweth our frame. We will do our best.

Out of the bosom of His love He spares—
The Father spares the Son, for thee to die :
For thee He died, for thee He lives again ;
O'er thee He watches in His boundless reign.

Thou art as much His care as if beside
Nor man nor angel lived in heaven or earth.

We say daily, "We are His people and the sheep of His pasture. We have erred and strayed from Thy ways, like lost sheep." Let us never forget these truths; let us never forget, on the one hand, that we are sinners; let us never forget, on the other hand, that Christ is our Guide and Guardian. Watch and pray and obey your conscience, though you cannot perceive your own progress in holiness. Go on, and you cannot but go forward; believe it, though you do not see it. Let your light shine before men, and praise God by a consistent life, even though others do not seem to glorify their Father on account of it or to be benefited by your example.

Tuesday in Holy Week.

Christ crucified. I CORINTHIANS i. 23.

WHAT have we now to think of? Christ's suffering and death. Let all else be a trifle; let all food and ease, and society and amusement, be trifles; this week let our souls be wholly taken up in this one absorbing, overwhelming point, the death of Christ for us. Fix your eyes on the Cross, the nails, the crown of thorns, the spitting, the exceeding bitter cry, the agony, the comforting, the angel, the last supper, the betrayal and the forsaking, the darkness, the yielding up the ghost, and the burial. Fix your eyes on all this, let everything else be forgotten, in this your salvation. "By His stripes we are healed;" "surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows." "He was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities." "We have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and He is the propitiation for our sins."

The Cross is sharp, and He
Is tenderer than a lamb.

He wept by Lazarus' grave—how will He bear
This bed of anguish? and His pale weak form
Is worn with many a watch
Of sorrow and unrest.

His sweat last night was as great drops of blood,
And the sad burthen pressed Him so to earth,
The very torturers paused
To help Him on His way.

So to the end, though now of mortal pangs
Made heir, and emptied of Thy glory awhile,
With unaverted eye
Thou meetest all the storm.

Thou wilt feel all, that Thou mayst pity all;
And rather wouldst Thou wrestle with strong pain
Than overcloud Thy soul
So clear in agony,

Or lose one glimpse of heaven before the time,
A most entire and perfect sacrifice.

Wednesday in Holy Week.

Make me to hear joy and gladness ; that the bones which Thou hast broken may rejoice. PSALM li. 8.

IF God rejoices over those who repent, it seems natural that He should wish that the penitent should recognise this, and this he cannot do unless he also rejoices in such restoration ; for when God bids us to rejoice with them that do rejoice on earth, much more does He bid us rejoice with him who rejoices in heaven. When the penitent is restored to the favour of God, he is restored to the greatest favour which a reasonable creature can enjoy. If in God's favour is life, he is restored to life ; if he is conscious of this, how can he help being glad ? Consider how this joy of the penitent is recognised by the Church both in her daily offices and in her highest act of praise and thanksgiving. How, then, can any one calling himself a son of the Church take upon himself to frown upon the joyful sense of forgiveness which the Father vouchsafes to him who "was dead and is alive again ; was lost and is found" ? We must sing with the spirit and with the understanding ; we must feel, and not rest till we do feel, what we sing in daily prayer and weekly sacraments.

What do we then ? if far and wide
Men kneel to Christ, the pure and meek,
Yet rage with passion, swell with pride,
Have we not still our faith to seek ?
Nay, but in steadfast humbleness
Kneel on to Him, Who loves to bless
The prayer that waits for Him, and trembling strive
To keep the lingering flame in thine own breast alive.

Thursday in Holy Week.

Christ crucified. I CORINTHIANS i. 23.

ARE we keeping this Holy Week as we should? if so, we shall find a blessing. It is very short, and these very short times are our helps, for it is easier to keep a short time strictly; yet a short time kept strictly is a help to keeping a long time well. Do we all come to church daily, and in the evenings trace His steps through the events of this holy time? Do we strictly examine ourselves, as if we were expecting Him to come as our King to judge us, as well as to die for us? Let us spend it quietly, let all feel it is the Holy Week; and though work must go on, still let us all keep our tongues quiet from slander and evil-speaking. Let us specially govern each member and each sense this week; let us be more than usually careful. When an unkind thing might be said, let us not say it; when we might indulge in pleasure, let us put it by; when a thing might be done which looks doubtful, let us decide against our pleasure rigidly and sincerely.

Let us curb our wills and purify our hearts. Persevere in the narrow way. Let us take up the cross of Christ that we may wear His crown. Let us prepare for suffering and disappointment, which befit us as sinners, and which are necessary for us as saints. Let us not turn away from trial when God brings it on us, or play the coward in the fight of faith. Give not over your attempts to serve God, though you see nothing come of them.

Come, Resignation, spirit meek,
And let me kiss thy placid cheek,
And read in thy pale eye serene
Their blessing, who by faith can wean
Their hearts from sense, and learn to love
God only, and the joys above.

Good Friday.

Blotting out the handwriting of our sins that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His Cross. COLOSSIANS ii. 14.

WE are led from the thought of Christ incarnate to that of Christ crucified, thus following the guidance of the Church in the order of the Creeds. To appreciate the merits of our blessed Lord's Passion we must strive to realize our need of a Saviour. Meditate upon Him hanging upon His painful Cross, bearing in His sacred Body the punishment due to sinful men; behold Him suffering the death of a common malefactor, His Body tortured by painful wounds, His soul borne down by sufferings. Indeed one scarcely ventures to speak or write much upon so sacred a subject. Christ's members should strive silently to realize it to themselves, following our blessed Lord in thought through the scenes of His sufferings and death. He who thus contemplates his crucified Lord will glory in nothing but the Cross of Christ, loving every cross which God lays upon him. As with the Cross of Christ, so is it also with His death and burial. These Divine truths convey a holy lesson for our practice as well as an article of belief for the exercise of our faith. The Crucifixion of our Lord brings before us the duty of crucifying the flesh with its affections and lusts, as well as the doctrine of the Cross of Christ. Strive by continual mortifying all corrupt affections so to be buried with Him here, that when we die we may rest in peace.

Lord of my heart, by Thy last cry
Let not Thy Blood on earth be spent ;
Lo, at Thy Feet I fainting lie,

Upon Thy streaming wounds my weary eyes
Wait like the parched earth on April skies.

Easter Eve.

I will lay me down in peace, and take my rest: for it is Thou, Lord, only, that makest me dwell in safety. PSALM iv. 9.

THIS blessing, of laying ourselves down in peace, and taking our rest, whether in our bed or in our grave, seems to bear an especial relation to the mystery of this day, the Burial of Jesus Christ. By virtue of our heavenly and spiritual union with Him, our buried Lord, we hope for safe and quiet sleep, after the work and service of each day of our trial, and for a slumber yet safer and quieter, when that trial is quite over; a comfortable place in Paradise for our souls, and for our bodies a grave on which God's blessing shall rest. Our warrant for this hope is, that the Son of God died for us, bought us to be His own with His precious Blood: bought us to be His own in such sort, that we should be really joined to Him, mystically made members of His Body, and as such have a share, as in His Cross and Passion here, so in the heavenly and eternal good things wherewith God crowned Him in the world out of sight. As members, inseparable members, of the Man Christ Jesus, we hope to have our bodies buried with Him; and for our souls, our true selves, we hope that when they pass away from our bodies, they may be with Him that day in Paradise.

O come that day, when in this restless heart
Earth shall resign her part,
When in the grave with Thee my limbs shall rest,
My soul with Thee be blest!
But stay, presumptuous—Christ with thee abides
In the rock's dreary sides:
He from the stone will celestial dew
If but the prisoner's heart be faithful found and true.

Easter Day.

Now is Christ risen. I CORINTHIANS XV. 20.

THIS is the day of days, the royal day, the Lord's day. This is the day on which Christ arose from the dead; the day which brought us salvation. It is a day which has made us greater than we know. It is our day of rest, the true Sabbath. Christ entered into His rest, and so do we. It brings us, in figure, through the grave and gate of death to our season of refreshment in Abraham's bosom. We have had enough of weariness, and dreariness, and listlessness, and sorrow, and remorse. We have had enough of this troublesome world. We have had enough of its noise and din. Noise is its best music. But now there is stillness; and it is a stillness that speaks. We know how strange the feeling is of perfect silence after continued sound. Such is our blessedness now. Calm and serene days have begun; and Christ is heard in them, and His still small voice, because the world speaks not. Let us but put off the world, and we put on Christ. The receding from one is an approach to the other. We have now, for some weeks, been trying, through His grace, to unclthe ourselves of earth by wants and desires. May that unclthing be unto us a clothing upon of things invisible and imperishable! May we grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour, season after season, year after year, till He takes to Himself, first one, then another, in the order He thinks fit, to be separated from each other for a little while, to be united together for ever, in the kingdom of His Father and our Father, His God and our God!

Jesus Christ is risen to-day, Alleluia!

Monday in Easter Week.

Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. COLOSSIANS iii. 3.

SINCE our life is hid, and we understand only so much as we, by acting, know, we must beware how we prejudice anything not to be useful to us, which comes to us in the form of untried self-discipline or self-denial, for it is by trial only that we know it. It is one of the most frequent hindrances to "a more excellent way;" for instead of trying it, men ask, Of what good is it to fast, to watch, to forego pleasures, to deny self? and thereby they show, that not having fasted or used self-denial, they know not what they are. Faith is the realizing before hand things unseen; so it is the characteristic of a noble faith to act on dim intimations of some holier, stricter life to which God would lead it, following the leadings of God's blessed Angel out of the prison-house of our mortality although not knowing whither it is being led. S. Augustine, in his unconverted state, was amazed at the self-denying life of S. Ambrose. He admired what S. Ambrose most dreaded, that "personages so great held him in such honour;" thought hardest what was his self-discipline, what struggles he had against the temptations which beset his very excellences, or what comfort in adversities, and what sweet joys Christ's Bread had for the hidden mouth of the soul. Knowledge is the reward of obedience. Would we know the value of anything we must try it.

So is it still : to holy tears,
In lonely hours, Christ risen appears ;
In social hours, who Christ would see,
Must turn all tasks to charity.

Tuesday in Easter Week.

Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be. I S. JOHN iii. 2.

As the full life of the blessed is hid even from the Saints here, and from that Ineffable Light which it is there flash forth only some gleams of bliss, in fervent prayer, in sacraments, in contemplation of our Lord, which come to us as angel-tokens from His presence, so throughout our life we know not what we are. We see ourselves, as we are, encompassed by death, and amidst this death have earnestness of life. We have "the first-fruits of the Spirit," love, faith, and hope; but since our love is imperfect, so is our life and our sense of life. The Source of our life is our Lord, hidden in God, streaming forth upon us through the blessed Comforter, discovering itself in holy aspirations, the "unutterable groanings" wherewith we long to be free from our remaining death, hidden strength, unseen victories; but since it is hidden, we must not long for it as though it were already revealed. Had we the fulness of that life, it were heaven itself. We have at one time the brightness of His presence, at another it is veiled from us, that we may be cheered onward when it is shining upon us and humbled when it is withdrawn; that in its brightness we may lose all other love, in its withdrawal hate ourselves and our sins. The "pillar of fire" or "the cloud" shall alike conduct us night and day to the Canaan of our everlasting rest and joy.

Holy Saviour, Friend unseen,
Since on Thine Arm Thou bidst me lean,
Help me throughout life's varying scene
By faith to cling to Thee.

Wednesday in Easter Week.

Love not the world. I S. JOHN ii. 15.

As this hidden life (of which we spoke yesterday) is obtained by deadness to the world, so by that deadness is it to be cherished, maintained, perfected. Death to the world is life to God; the life in God deadens to the world. By baptism we were made partakers of Christ's death, that we might henceforth share His life. We were deadened that we might remain dead, and His imparted life absorb into itself our whole selves, and quicken us in every part, that we might live to Him, be dead to all out of Him. Since that hour each act of sin (much more if any of us unhappily continue in any course of sin) has been a revival of that which was dead, a minishing of our life. Self-indulgence of every sort—following our own wills, love of pre-eminence, of man's praise, covetousness, self-display, self-applause—deadens our inward life. And so now each act of obedience, renunciation of ourselves and of self-will, deadness to the world's applause, its idols, its covetousness, to "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, the pride of life," is an increase of our hidden life. The less we live for things outward, the stronger burns our inward life.

"Inheritors" are we
"Of heaven's kingdom" blest,
O tremble, lest through unbelief
We lose our final rest!

Upon our brows we bear
Christ's holy suffering sign;
That on each saintly forehead there
A glorious crown may shine.

Thursday in Easter Week.

Mortify therefore your members. COLOSSIANS iii. 5.

SELF-DENYING duty, love, and contemplation together advance this hidden life (which we are still contemplating). Alone, self-denying duty were austere and hard; love were weak and faint; contemplation but imaginative or sensual. Together, self-denial deadens the flesh; deeds of love soften the spirit; contemplation fixes the soul upon God. Without self-denial and love, contemplation could not be; without it, even they would abide on earth. Deeds of self-denying active love may still leave the soul very imperfect in love, unless it habitually and consciously refer them to God as their Beginning and their End; and out of, or amidst, or at intervals from, active service, withdraw from all created things to commune with its God. Even prayer will become lukewarm unless it be fed by meditation upon God, and the soul be borne, beyond the words of its prayer, to dwell on Him Whom it would love. In our very excellences we need continual checks, lest over-activity make us forget to sit at Jesus' Feet, or we think that we are sitting there, while we are seeking only the shade, and shrinking from "the burthen and heat of the day," from thankless toil and dying strife. "The Redeemer of mankind in the daytime," says S. Gregory, "exhibits His miracles in cities, and spends the night in devotion to prayer upon the mountain." What a lesson for us all! May we all lay it to heart now, and remember that

Faith doth hallow all things, nursed with love.

Friday in Easter Week.

For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth. HEBREWS xii. 6.

BE not like those who fret or stand amazed at the losses or sorrows which God sends them. But in each seek for what end He sends it ; die more to the world, from which He is detaching us ; look whereunto He is calling us ; strive to forget the world, its pomps, its sorrows, its vain desires, its destructive pleasures, its bitter sorrows and more bitter joys, in Him. Contemplating Him and His Cross, each sorrow will but unloose one link of the chain which sin binds round us, and which withholds us from Him ; each pang of pain will be but His welcome messenger ; all shall we gladly share with Him, in His sufferings forget our own ; glad to share here, for our own sins' sakes, suffering, pain, bereavement, sorrow, loss, contempt, knowing that we are safer thus than in health, reputation, abundance, gladness, enjoyment of all things ; glad to share all suffering which He, for our sakes, suffered, so, for His sufferings' sake, He give "us for a prey" our own souls which we had justly forfeited, and the souls which we have loved. For nothing earthly can satisfy the soul which is heavenly. All which passeth away is unreal, and what is unreal cannot satisfy ; all passeth away except the soul and God.

I know that trial works for ends
Too high for sense to trace,
That oft in dark attire He sends
Some embassy of grace.

May none depart till I have gained
The blessing which it bears,
And learn, though late, I entertained
An angel unawares.

So shall I bless the hour that sent
The mercy of the rod,
And build an altar by the tent
Where I have met with God.

Saturday in Easter Week.

Use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away. I CORINTHIANS vii. 31.

USE, then, rather the very things of time and sense, whereby others are drawn down to the world, to rise thereby to God. All has been hallowed since they have been used by Him Who, being God, for us became man. Let us take, then, our food as from His Hand, Who is Himself the Food of Angels and our own; lie down to rest, as longing, although unworthy, to rest in Him; rise, as from death, to live anew the life of Him; gaze not on anything fair, but in it to behold Him; through what is seen, rise to Him Who is Unseen; in a word, whatever we do, fast or feast, labour or rest, learn or teach, behold what He has spread around us, or close our eyes, seek in all to see Him, to live to Him, and He Who is our Life will pour His hidden Life into our souls, will blind our eyes and stop our ears to this world's tinsel show and false unreal vanities, and open them to hear His own saving cheering Voice, and to see the Image of His beauty, and He will pierce us with the sweetness of His love, and lift up our hearts to long for Him, their never-failing, ever-satisfying Fulness.

All things speak from Thee, every sun that shines
Sets forth Thine image, and each day's return
Is herald of the morn that ne'er declines;
The bright recovering year, at every turn
Speaks of that great new year, where all things burn
In glorious beauty round the Source of light.
All are Thy teachers, grant us to discern
Their heavenly lessons; cleanse our mortal sight,
We have enough to preach, did we but hear aright.

First Sunday after Easter.

(Called Low Sunday.)

Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God. I S. JOHN v. 5.

ABOVE all things, in all things, "look unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of thy faith." Do things through His grace, for Him, looking to Him as thy everlasting great Reward. Let nothing keep thee back from Him. If thou failest, look to Him to uphold thee; if thou stumblest, hold swift His Hand to keep thee; if thou fallest, lie not hopelessly there, but look to Him to raise thee; if by His grace thou doest well, look to Him in thanksgiving that He has helped thee, and pray that thou mayest do better. Mourn to Him, for love of Him, that thou ever offendest Him; mourn to Him all thy offences, one by one, against Him; but pray Him that for love of Him thou mayest no more offend Him. Do deeds of love for Him, to Him, following His steps. "The severing of love," says a holy man, "is the death of faith." Believest thou in Christ? Do the works of "Christ, that thy faith may live." Let love give light to thy faith, works prove it.

I thank Thee I am not mine own,
But have to live in Thee alone,
Each passing day, each passing hour,
To live in Thy great power;
Whate'er to-day, to-morrow brings,
'Tis all Thine Hand, Thine orderings.

'Tis blest to breathe in Thy sure love,
On Thee, in Thee to live and move;
'Tis blest each day to still live on
In Thy sustaining Son.
Whate'er may come, it is all Thine,
To love Thee and obey be mine.

Monday of the First Week after Easter.

For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. 1 S. JOHN v. 7.

WHO is the Object of faith? God the Father, Who created us and gave His Son to die for us; God the Son, Who became one of us, and by dying redeemed us; God the Holy Ghost, Who sanctifieth us, and "pours forth love," which He is, "abroad in our hearts." We were as stocks and stones without faith; but He died, even "of these stones to raise up children to Abraham." Are we stocks or stones now, that having faith, we can believe without loving? Which of His acts of boundless love should we believe without loving? Were it not enough to bear us out of ourselves for love, to transport us, to make us give up our lives for love, to carry us away out of ourselves and of all that we are, to think that for us, earthworms and defiled, Jesus died? Does not the very Name of Jesus make the heart beat and tremble and thrill with love?

Then why not love Thee from my heart?
Why, Jesus, not love Thee, Who art
All love for me?
And not for hope of endless joys,
Or fear of endless miseries;
But all for Thee!

'Twas love, O Saviour, made Thee mine;
And love alone can make me Thine;
Then Jesus, then
Thee will I love, and Thee adore,
My King, and God, for evermore.
Amen! Amen!

Tuesday of the First Week after Easter.

And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. 1 S. JOHN v. 11.

COULD a criminal really believe that he had received a full pardon from his injured king, or that the king's son had suffered to obtain his pardon, and was come to tell it him and forgive him, and not love? Might he doubt such love? But he could not believe it and not love. Faith and love would enter his soul together. So is it with children, who with simple faith believe, and place no hindrance to belief and love. Tell them of their good Father in heaven, and they together believe in and love Him. Tell them of Jesu's love, and they together believe in and love Him. Tell them of the Holy Ghost the Comforter, that He vouchsafes to dwell in them, they listen with wondering awe and love; they believe at once and love. Love is in all true faith, as light and warmth are in the ray of the sun. The sun's ray brings with it light and warmth, not light and warmth the sun's ray. Where the sun's ray is, there are light and warmth; nor can that ray be anywhere without giving light and warmth. So faith it is which brings love, not love faith; yet faith cannot come into the heart without bringing with it the glow of love, yea, and the light wherewith we see things Divine. So soon as faith is kindled in the heart, there is the glow of love; and both come from the same Sun of Righteousness, pouring in faith and love together into the heart.

O Thou great Power, in Whom I move,
For Whom I live, to Whom I die,
Behold me through Thy beams of love,
And cleanse my sordid soul within
By Thy Christ's Blood, the bath of sin.

Wednesday of the First Week after Easter.

And these all, having obtained a good report through faith.
HEBREWS xi. 39.

THINK on the great instances of faith in Holy Scripture. Think you not that Abraham loved as well as believed, when God first spake to him, and called him to give up his country and his kindred and his father's house; and instead of all God said, "I will bless thee," and he took God for his all, and went out not knowing whither he went save that he was following God? Or David, did he not love when, in zeal for the honour of the Lord of Hosts, he went forth, a stripling, in His Name, to meet the champion of the Philistines? Or did not love with faith revive when the royal penitent said, "I have sinned against the Lord;" and much more when the Lord had put away his sin, he all lifelong said, "My sin is ever before me"? Why did he wish to be cleansed with the atoning hyssop, even the humiliation of our Lord in His Passion? was it not for love of God? "Thou desirest truth in the inward parts." So he longed to be what God would have him. What longed he for, but not to be "cast out of God's holy presence" or lose His Holy Spirit. His presence, from the soul? Or in S. Peter, when both faith and love had been chilled in the height of the Lord's Passion, did they not revive by that gracious look wherewith He recalled him to himself, and melted him into tears of penitence and love?

He loves and is beloved again ;
Can His soul choose but be at rest ?
Sorrow hath fled away, and pain
Dares not invade the guarded nest.

Thursday of the First Week after Easter.

Faith worketh by love. GALATIANS v. 6.

IN that great penitent, S. Mary Magdalene, our Lord bears witness that in her there were together love and faith; and for both together, a loving faith, or a "faith working by love," our Lord tells her, "thy sins are forgiven." Truly, she had great faith, who knows and believed the Physician of her soul, and knew that "the Son of Man had power on earth to forgive sins," and could read her heart, and knew what she was, what she longed to be, what she came for; would not disdain her, would accept her love, that she might kiss His Feet, and that when she washed them with her tears, He would wash away her sins. She had great faith. Our Lord speaks first of love, "Her sins are forgiven her, *because* she loved much." She must have loved much, when she poured out her tears with the ointment upon His sacred Feet. She knew Him Whom the self-righteous Pharisee knew not. She knew the depth of the loathsomeness of her own sin, for she loathed it in herself, but she knew what the Pharisee knew not, Who He was Whom she touched. She knew that holiness came from His touch to her. Think you not that those hot burning tears which dimmed her eyes and washed her Saviour's Feet were tears of burning love? Could she but love when she kissed the Feet of God, wearied in seeking her, the lost one? He despised not her polluted lips, but rather "virtue went out of Him" to cleanse them.

O God of our salvation, Lord
Of wondrous power and love!
May faith, salvation's holy seed,
Be sent us from above.

Friday of the First Week after Easter.

By grace are ye saved through faith ; and that not of yourselves : it is the gift of God. EPHESIANS ii. 8.

EVEN faith whereby we are accounted and made righteous before God, is not our own, lest we should think we had anything of our own ; “it” (faith also) “is the gift of God.” But this gift, whether of faith or love, is so given, that it is with us to receive it. We come to God by faith and love. But “no man cometh unto Me,” saith our Lord, “except the Father Which hath sent Me draw him.” But by both He draws us through our will, not drags us against it. The pleasures of sense and of the world draw us one way ; God the Father and Christ draw us the other. Neither irresistibly. “If,” says a father, “pleasure draweth, how much more may we say that a man is drawn to Christ, who is delighted by truth, delighted by blessedness, delighted by righteousness, delighted by everlasting life, all which Christ is. Believe and thou comest, love and thou art drawn. Think not that it is a painful violence : it is sweet, pleasant ; the very sweetness draws thee.” The drawing of grace changes nature and strengthens nature, reforms nature, subdues nature ; but only if we be willing to be changed, reformed, subdued, strengthened. We are drawn with the cords of a man, not dragged as brutes. “The drawing of grace raises upwards towards heaven the will, inclined towards the flesh ; allures it when resisting ; strengthens it when weak ; gives it when fearful a good courage towards good.”

Our restless spirits yearn for Thee,
Where'er our changeful lot is cast :
Glad, when Thy gracious smile we see ;
Blest, when our faith can hold Thee fast.

Saturday of the First Week after Easter.

He that hath the Son hath life. 1 S. JOHN v. 12.

It was man's sin that, "when He came unto His own, His own received Him not;" but "to as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe in His Name." "He gave them power," which by nature they had not and could not have—here is the grace and gift of God; but "to as many as received Him"—here is the will of man, although enabled and receiving power to receive Him from God. He does not say here "He made them sons of God" (although when we receive Him, He doth so make us, for none can make us the sons of God save God Himself by the Spirit of adoption), but here He goes farther back and says "He gave us power." He wishes at the same time to show thee that not even grace cometh upon us anyhow, but on those who wish for it, and take pains about it. He doth not give to us unwilling, but if we ourselves will it and consent and long for it. How, then, may we know if we have this faith? How do we know that our bodies live? As, says a holy man, we discern the life of this body by its motion, so also the life of faith by good works. The life of the body is the soul, whereby it is moved and feels; the life of faith is love, because by it it worketh, as thou readest in the Apostle, "faith which worketh by love."

This grace on Thy redeemed confer,
Father, coequal Son,
And Holy Ghost the Comforter :
Eternal Three in One.

Second Sunday after Easter.

Even hereunto were ye called : because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps. I S. PETER ii. 21.

PATIENCE is the endurance of any evil, out of the love of God, as the will of God. There is nothing too little in which to approve ourselves to God ; nothing too little in which, without God, we should not fail ; nothing too great which, with the help of God, we may not endure. We have need of patience with ourselves, with others ; with those who love us and those who love us not ; and under our daily burdens ; disappointments as to the weather or the breaking of the heart ; in the weariness of the body, or the wearing of the soul ; in our own failure of duty, or others' failure towards us ; in everyday wants, in the aching of sickness, the decay of age ; in disappointment, bereavement, injuries, reproaches ; in heaviness of the heart amid delayed hopes, from which we would be free, that we might have no more struggle with sin within or temptation without, but attain to everlasting peace in our rest in God. In all these things, from childhood's little troubles to the martyr's sufferings, patience is the grace of God whereby we endure evil for the love of God, and keep ourselves still that we offend not God.

Give me not what I ask, but what is good.
Merciful Saviour, unto Thee I look ;
Oh, teach me these repining thoughts to brook.
I know I were not happier, though endued
With all on which my unbridled longings brood ;
For joy to me hath ever been a gale
Which, like some demon filling the glad sail,
Wantoned awhile on summer seas, and wooed
To tempt o'er hidden shoals. Make me Thine own
And take me ; of myself I am afraid,
Oh take me from myself ; oh take away
Whate'er of self is in me, and, I pray,
Give me on what my spirit may be stayed,
And that I know full well is but Thyself alone.

Monday of the Second Week after Easter.

Let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing. S. JAMES i. 4.

ALL other virtues and graces have need of patience to perfect or secure them. Patience interposes herself, and receives and stops every dart which the evil one aims at them. "Patience is the root and guardian of all virtue," says S. Gregory; impatience is the enemy of all. Impatience disquiets the soul, makes her weary of conflict, ready to lay aside her armour and to leave difficult duty. Impatience, by troubling the smooth mirror of the soul, hinders her from reflecting the face of God; by its din it hinders her from hearing the voice of God. It makes the soul outrun or fall short of the will of God. Impatience listens to nothing, heeds nothing, fears nothing, hopes nothing, judges aright of nothing, perseveres in nothing except in restlessness. Impatience is a burden to itself, distrusts man, rebels against God. It shakes every virtue, and enters into almost every sin. It casts aside every remedy for itself or for any other fault. Impatience made Cain a murderer, and Absalom a parricide, and Judas a Deicide. Impatience, not waiting for God, turns even goods into evils. Jeroboam waited not for the goods which God had promised him; he forfeited them, destroyed his own house, which he wished to raise, and left of his ambition no memorial save that it was he "who did sin and who made Israel to sin."

Though dark my path, and sad my lot,
Let me be still and murmur not,
Or breathe the prayer divinely taught,
Thy will be done.

Renew my will from day to-day,
Blend it with Thine, and take away
All that now makes it hard to say
Thy will be done.

Tuesday of the Second Week after Easter.

In your patience possess ye your souls. S. LUKE xxi. 19.

By patience we have the keeping of our own souls ; we command ourselves, our passions are subdued to us ; and commanding ourselves, we begin to possess that which we are. "What is to possess a thing, but to have entire command over it, that we may do with it what we will?" What, then, is to "possess the soul," but to be lord over all its powers, motions, emotions, and by the grace of God to control them according to His will? Whence even the world calls a man "self-possessed" who cannot be thrown off his guard, but, gathered up within himself and immovable, has a steady command of all the powers of his mind. He is spiritually "self-possessed" who by the grace of God so keeps himself that "no vehemence of delight masters him, no tribulation wears him out, no sudden temptation carries him away, no unworthy affection draws him from God." Patience is the guardian of faith, the fence of love, the strength of hope, the parent of peace. Patience protects humility, keeps meekness, is the soul of long-suffering, guides gentleness, strengthens perseverance. Patience "bridleth the tongue, restraineth the hand, ruleth the flesh, preserveth the spirit, tramples on temptations, breaks the force of passion, calms the violence of pride, quenches the fire of variance," bids, in its Lord's Name, wind and storm "be still ;" and there is a calm. Patience makes the soul to be of one mind with God, sweetens the ills of life.

Thus the wilderness,
Forgetting her distress,
Can bloom like garden of the Lord,
Like Eden fruits afford :
The fountain in the desert flows,
The thistle bears the rose.

Wednesday of the Second Week after Easter.

For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth. HEBREWS xii. 6.

GREAT must be the blessing of evil, since it is so widely spread in the works of a good God. Deep must the blessing of evil be, since God vouchsafed it so largely to those whom He made most like to His own Son in the flesh. Very necessary must evil be to us, since none, fence themselves as they may from it, can escape it. None *do*, in any great measure, escape it, save those who, resisting God, are at length abandoned by God, and, forsaking Him and forsaken by Him, are left unvisited by Him in His mercy until they have treasured up His wrath to the uttermost. So strongly is this stamped upon our fallen nature, that even the heathen felt that unmingled prosperity was the herald of woe to come. Absence of chastisement or trial, the fulness of the world's prosperity, are the worst outward tokens of man's salvation. Blow upon blow, and wound upon wound, are signs of His mercy.

O Thou Whose sacred Feet have trod
The thorny path of woe,
Forbid that I should slight the rod,
Or faint beneath the blow.

My spirit to its chastening stroke
I meekly would resign,
Nor murmur at the heaviest yoke
That tells me I am Thine.

Give me the spirit of Thy trust,
To suffer as a son,
To say when lying in the dust,
My Father's will be done !

Thursday of the Second Week after Easter.

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.
PHILIPPIANS ii. 5.

GLORIOUS for the Christian to bear the marks of His Lord. What more blessed for the bride than to be likened to the Bridegroom? What for the members than to be likened to the thorn-crowned Head? His sufferings have even now passed anew before our eyes. All the sufferings of His life were gathered before us in His death. What of bodily suffering was missing when every spot in His holy tender frame was rent with scourges, when limb was disjoined, every sense racked with agony, when from the thorn-encircled Head, in unrest upon the hard Cross, to the pierced Feet, all was "wounds and bruises and putrefying sores"? What when man disowned his Redeemer, and accused the Holy One as blaspheming Him Whose will He came to do, and the Father for the time owned Him not? And now how is it the scars of His nailed Hands and wounded Feet and pierced Side remain, but in what glory! He rose again, a spiritual Body, yet with the tokens of His Passion. Then He showed Himself to His disciples, to be seen, touched. With that same Body He ascended into heaven. In that same Body He there "liveth to make intercession for us." These glorious wounds plead for us with the Father night and day, to turn away His wrath from us. Those ever-blessed wounds, the memorials of His Passion, the ensigns of His victory. Brighter are they than all created brightness; for their brightness is the glory of the love of God. Such the reward of suffering; such the Pattern ye in your measure are to follow; such the Image to which we are to be conformed, of patient suffering here and everlasting reward hereafter.

Friday of the Second Week after Easter.

The hairs of your head are all numbered. S. MATTHEW x. 30.

OUR Lord teaches us as to those very little things in order that we may know and feel that nothing is too little to be ordered by our Father, nothing too little in which to see His Hand, nothing which touches our souls too little to accept from Him, nothing too little to be done to Him. Every secret sigh He hears at once from every bosom in His whole creation. Every secret wish or prayer He hears while yet unuttered or unformed. He Who is in the highest heaven, and filleth all things, but is contained by none, He is present to each single heart, and hears, and if the heart form its wish to Him, He hearkens. This then is the first great ground of patience, that God is our Father, All-wise, All-loving, All-good; that "He can do what is best for our souls," while "we poor beings neither know nor care, nor, as we ought, will it." He knows not only every illness which in His good Providence He sends, but every ache or pain of it. He knows our every want in every day, and whether we shall look to Him in it or no. He knows every cross which befalls us. Mankind and each several human being, with all their sins, negligences, ignorances, work out through their own ungoverned will exactly that measure of trial which God in His infinite wisdom knows to be best for the perfecting of those who love Him, or for the chastening of those who may be turned to love Him.

My times are in Thy Hand,
Whatever they may be,
Pleasing or painful, dark or bright,
As best may seem to Thee.

Saturday of the Second Week after Easter.

No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous.
HEBREWS xii. 11.

EVERY trial has its own weight. It is our wisdom and humility to own this. Were it not so people would not bear petty trials so ill. It is not lack of patience to be "heavy and exceeding sorrowful under it." Our loving Lord sanctified such human feeling by the heaviness which in the garden He allowed to come over His soul. Impatience is not to be cut to the heart with anguish, nor to writhe in agony, but, not "out of the deep, to call upon God." Impatience is not mutely to shrink from suffering, but to toss feverishly, forgetting God. The heart may, and must, rise and sink ; we can by God's grace control it, keep it outwardly still, hinder it from having any wrong vent. We cannot hush its beatings. Hard words *will* vex ; unkindness *will* pierce ; neglect *will* wound ; threatened evils will make the soul quiver ; sharp pain or weariness *will* rack the body or make it restless ; cold *will* fret the frame ; hunger *will* gnaw it. But what says the Psalmist ? "When my heart is vexed I will complain." To whom ? Not *of* God, but *to* God. As thou learnest this lesson to carry all thy sorrows to God, and lie at thy Saviour's Feet and spread thy grief before Him, thou wilt find a calm come over thee, thou knowest not whence ; thou wilt see through the clouds

A bright opening, for
When skies are dark and drear,
When winds are high and clouds are low,
And men want words of cheer :
While sorrow lives, Thy presence gives
A hope that it will die ;
When sorrow dies, then I arise
And melt into the sky.

Third Sunday after Easter.

Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul. I S. PETER ii. 11.

THERE is the warning against the lust of the flesh. A warning to remind us how most of the sins which infect the soul have their origin in the body; how from little beginnings, little self-indulgences, the temptation goes on to deeper and deeper sins, till at length it brings them within the net of that fearful seventh commandment, whereby such infinite multitudes will be condemned in the last day. The greater part of the wars that the soul has to sustain are carried on against the body, and when, therefore, that has been thoroughly brought under—which will not be till the next world—her warfare is accomplished. Follow Christ, the remedy and warning against the pride of life. What cloak is that which we are to cast about us, but the putting on our Lord Jesus Christ? first in baptism, afterwards as often as, renouncing every trust and confidence in ourselves, we unite our own poor works with the actions and sufferings of our Lord, and so look to them, and not to ourselves, for salvation; following, in this, all the Saints in their several courses, trying to discover no new way for ourselves, but keeping to the King's highway, and turning neither to the right hand nor to the left.

The faith sown by His Martyrs' blood,
Which through all lands shall spread abroad.

O Lord, the power baptismal give
With Thee to die, with Thee to live,
To tread on earthly things and love
The better things that are above.

Monday of the Third Week after Easter.

Behold, I have set before thee an open door. REVELATION iii. 8.

"AN open door," a door of opportunity. Before every one of us, every day of our existence, God opens the door of opportunity. He has "made ready good works for us to do," and we, many of us, are always wanting work, always seeking "our sphere of usefulness," as we call it. And every man's work lies close to his hand; he touches it every day. Yes, the honoured, the sacred work, apportioned you by God, the work over which there hangs the jewelled crown of the kingdom of heaven, your hand touches every day. Your character, which gives you power, influence, your geniality, your cheerfulness, your sympathy, your business powers, your honest worth, anything that gives you influence, be it influence over a little child only, there lies one of your talents; and every day God sets before you good works.

New mercies, each returning day,
Hover around us while we pray;
New perils past, new sins forgiven,
New thoughts of God, new hopes of heaven.

If on our daily course our mind
Be set to hallow all we find,
New treasures still of countless price
God will provide for sacrifice.

The trivial round, the common task,
Would furnish all we ought to ask;
Room to deny ourselves; a road
To bring us, daily, nearer God.

Only, O Lord, in Thy dear love
Fit us for perfect rest above;
And help us, this and every day,
To live more nearly as we pray.

Tuesday of the Third Week after Easter.

A little while. S. JOHN xvi. 18.

LET what may happen your life, the life that you live with God and for His sake must be preserved, cost what it may. It will cost you a great many sorrowful confessions; it will cost you some hard penances; it will cost you many a day of weariness, many a night of watching, but you must say, like the chief of old, "I have opened my mouth unto the Lord, and I cannot go back." You know, each of you, what is that sin which cleaves as closely to you as a garment, and which you must tear off and leave behind if you desire to be presented hereafter, as brides of Christ should be, not having spot nor wrinkle, nor any such thing. It will be a terrible wrench. Sometimes it is very hard to obey. It is so very hard when angry to kneel down and say, "Now from this spot I will not rise till every spark of anger is gone." It is very hard to make the body suffer that the soul may escape. What a wonderful power there is in these words "a little while"! In the season of affliction or the hour of temptation, or amidst quarrels and disputes, how soothing and calming is this mysterious expression of our Lord's "a little while"! A little while and this trouble, this joy, this passion—all this scene—will have gone by; then be our constant watchword this, "The Lord Himself is near!"

Take anxious care for nought,
To God your wants make known,
And soar, on wings of heavenly thought,
Towards His eternal throne.

So, though our path is steep,
And many a tempest lours,
Shall His own peace our spirits keep,
And Christ's dear love be ours.

Wednesday of the Third Week after Easter.

Cease to do evil ; learn to do well. ISAIAH i. 16, 17.

LET us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us ; this is the first step. S. Paul speaks of us as in a race, a race for life eternal, of which our Lord, Who gives us strength to run, the Author of our faith, will be Himself the Finisher, complete it in time, reward it in eternity. Two things hinder men in a race, a weight to carry, or whatever entangles their feet. What is the weight in our way to heaven ? The mass of worldly thoughts, cares, longings ; the confused heap of sins, of which we confess "the burden of them is intolerable." What is the one sin which doth so easily beset us ? We have each one special weakness which besets us, is ever twining itself around us, and from which, until we disentangle ourselves, we make but little progress. It comes to us sometimes in the very same shape, sometimes in another ; sometimes in acts so slight that we heed them not, sometimes in temptations so vehement that they carry us off our feet. It comes to us mostly in a few ways, but these so in and out as it were, sometimes in the one, sometimes in the other, that till men examine it slowly, and take it away piece by piece, it seems much stronger than it is. So you have felt when briars have entangled you and hindered your walking. The more you stumbled on impatiently the more hold they seemed to have of you. If you took them off quietly, you were surprised how slight a thing it was which was hindering you ; then

Despair not in the vale of woe,
Where many joys from suffering flow.

Thursday of the Third Week after Easter.

Cease to do evil ; learn to do well. ISAIAH i. 16, 17.

THERE are two sorts of work before us to be done by the grace of God : first we have to strive against the whole body of sin, everything which is against the holy will of God, "every evil inclination, all iniquity and profaneness, neglect and haughtiness, strife and wrath, passion and corruption, indolence and fraud, every evil motion, every impure thought, every base desire, every unseemly thought." Secondly, we have all some one besetting fault, which is our own special hindrance. Both of these we must learn by looking into ourselves. No two persons have exactly the same temptations, as no two minds are exactly alike ; and so we ought not to judge of others, nor can we judge of ourselves, by them. We must look into ourselves, and this is the examination of ourselves which we are bidden to use, of which the Church reminds us. We have these two searches into ourselves to make, one into every part of ourselves, the other into that part of ourselves which is the weakest, and through which we most often fall. Of these, holy men recommend that we should begin with our besetting fault. For many reasons. It lies, most likely, at the root of many other faults. It burrows under ground as it were, and comes up at a distance where we look not for it. It branches out into other faults ; twines round and kills some grace ; hides itself behind other faults or virtues. It interferes with, or overshadows or overlays every grace. But the more this one fault spreads, the more, if you uproot it, you will clear of the field of your conscience ; for

One furnace many times the good and bad will hold,
Yet what consumes the chaff will only cleanse the gold.

Friday of the Third Week after Easter.

Show My people their transgressions and sins. ISAIAH lviii. 1.

ASK God, then, in earnest prayer to show you wherein your chief fault lies. Think, when death and the Day of Judgment comes before you, what sin most frightens you ; or by what you fall most often ; or for what your conscience most reproaches you ; or against what you have made most good resolutions and have broken them ; or what fault it would seem hardest to you to give up ; or what makes you most unhappy when alone ; or what seems most to keep you back from God, or afraid to think of Him ; or what stands in your way when you wish to serve God ; or in what you would least like others to know you just as you are ; or what you feel most guilty about when it is blamed in others ; or what frightens you from coming to Holy Communion, or when you come to it ; or what sin you are most tempted to turn away from and hide your own eyes from, that you may not see it. Or again, on the contrary, what subject your thoughts, when you have nothing else to do, most dwell upon ; or what thoughts flash across you, amidst other occupations, and come oftenest to you and you entertain them ; or for what others have so often blamed you. In some or other of these ways God will show you wherein your chief sin lies ; or those who know you well and love you, could help you ; or God may, at once, if you are in earnest, bring it before you.

But ye perchance
Are deeper plunged in sorrow's trance.
Your God forgives, but ye no comfort take
Till ye have scourged the sins that in
Your conscience ache.

Saturday of the Third Week after Easter.

Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of My God. REVELATION iii. 12.

You will, I hope by God's blessing, have been encouraged this week to fight that good fight of faith. God willeth that you should prevail. He will help you, Who wills to crown you. Only purpose to fight, "looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of your faith." In the Name of Jesus is untold strength. Without Him ye can do nothing; with Him ye can do all things. For He will do all for you. Only He will do it with you, in you, through you, not without you. He has overcome sin once for you, and slain it by His own death. Now, if ye will, He will overcome it in you. When your hearts fail, He will comfort you; when you are weak, He will strengthen you. If amid real strife ye fall, He will lift you up; if ye be faint and weary, He will refresh you. Look to Him, pray to Him, and He will be in life your strength; in death your stay; in eternity, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, "your exceeding great Reward."

Say, happy souls, whose thirst now meets

The fresh and living streams of sweets

Which sprang from that blest throne,

Did you not find this true, even here;

Do you not find it truer there,

Now heaven is all your own?

O yes, the sweets we taste exceed

All you can say, or you can read,

They fill and never cloy.

On earth our cup was sweet but mixed,

Here all is pure, refined, and fixed,

All quintessence of joy.

Hearst thou, my soul, what glorious things

The Church in heaven in triumph sings

Of their blest life above?

Cheer thy faint hopes, and bid them live,

All these to thee thy God will give,

If thou embrace His love.

The Fourth Sunday after Easter.

I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth : for He shall not speak of Himself ; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak : and He will show you things to come. S. JOHN xvi. 12, 13.

WHY was our Lord's teaching thus incomplete, incomplete according to His own will and announcement? The answer is, that the same motives which led Him to teach men at all, led Him also to impose these limits and restraints upon His process of teaching. He taught men to emerge from their ignorance, because He loved them too much to leave them in it. He taught men gradually and as they were able to bear the strong light of truth, because He loved men too well to shock or to blind them by the sudden blaze of that truth. This gradual unfolding of the mind of God throughout all the ages, to the last great revelation that He made, is based throughout at every step of it upon His *tender* and *loving* consideration for human weakness.

Lead, kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom

Lead Thou me on ;

The night is dark, and I am far from home,

Lead Thou me on.

Keep Thou my feet, I do not ask to see

The distant scene ; one step enough for me.

I was not ever thus, nor prayed that Thou

Shouldst lead me ;

I loved to choose and see my path ; but now

Lead Thou me on.

I loved the garish day, and spite of fears,

Pride ruled my will ; remember not past years.

So long Thy power hath blest me, sure it still

Will lead me on

O'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent, till

The night is gone,

And with the morn those angel faces smile

Which I have loved long since and lost awhile.

Monday of the Fourth Week after Easter.

For He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will show you things to come.
S. JOHN xvi. 13.

THE Holy Spirit will give you understanding to know and a heart to love the truth; as He proceedeth from the Father and the Son, what He heareth He shall teach. So shall there be a oneness in the truth; it is but one truth throughout. So shall it ever be unto the end; the Holy Spirit within the Church speaks only what He hath heard. Being of one essence with the Father and the Son, He bringeth all things into intimate union; and in the Church, as in the hearts of men, He will be the "good and perfect Gift from above," coming down "from the Father of lights." In the Church, and in each member of it, the Holy Spirit shall bring all things into harmony and peace. One faith, one truth, one Lord, three Persons in one God, and bringing all Christians into that unity which is in God. When He speaks of the past, He shall bring to remembrance what Christ hath taught; and when He foretells things to come, "the testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of prophecy."

Come, O Creator Spirit !
Visit this soul of Thine ;
This heart of Thy creating
Fill Thou with grace Divine.
Who Paraclete art called !
The Gift of God above !
Pure Unction ! holy Fire !
And Fount of life and love !
Finger of God's right hand !
The Father's promise true !
Who sevenfold gifts bestowest !
Who dost the tongue endow !
Pour love into our hearts ;
Our senses touch with light ;
Make strong our human frailty
With Thy supernal might.

Tuesday of the Fourth Week after Easter.

He shall glorify Me : for He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you. All things that the Father hath are Mine : therefore said I, that He shall take of Mine, and shall show it unto you. S. JOHN xvi. 14, 15.

“HE shall glorify Me,” our Lord adds; for as the mission of the Son was to the glory of the Father, so the mission of the Holy Ghost is especially to “glorify” the Son, by bringing all men to acknowledge Him, by uniting them to His Body, by dispensing His gifts purchased by His death, by preparing men for His return in glory. “He shall glorify Me; for He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you. All things that the Father hath are Mine: therefore said I, that He shall take of Mine, and show it unto you.” And here we may observe that our Lord is in this place comforting His disciples respecting His own departure from them, which had filled their hearts with sorrow; and therefore, in speaking of that Divine Person, the Spirit of Truth, Whom He would send from the Father to be with them, He dwells especially on His intimate union with Himself, of supplying His place in their bereavement, of teaching them those very things He had wished to do, if they had been able to bear them; of glorifying Him, of receiving of Him, and showing unto them those things which were His in His union with the Father.

Thy blest anointing give ;
The letters, now on mute heart writ,
Then shall come forth and live
By Thy celestial brightness lit.

Throughout eternity,
Unto the Father and the Son,
And Spirit, glory be ;
The Spirit, binding Three in One.

Wednesday of the Fourth Week after Easter.

Live according to God in the Spirit. I S. PETER iv. 6.

THE one chief lesson which the Church would inculcate on us this week, I think, is this, that if we would live in the Spirit, would wait and pray for and seek His guidance, it will bring us more and more to the love of Christ, as revealed to us so fully in the Gospels. There we read of Him ; we hear Him, as it were, and see Him ; He is manifested to us as the Son of Man, our Example, our Advocate, the Sacrifice for us. In His parables, in His miracles of mercy, and His daily life, we have Him, as it were, before us ; it is to the love of Him, and obedience to Him, to His likeness, the Holy Spirit must conform our unruly wills and affections. The Spirit is One with the Incarnate Son of God. The unity of the Godhead, the Three Persons in One God, is not a barren truth, the devout consideration of it promotes unity in us. Our Lord's prayer for Christians to the Father is, "that they may be one, as We are one." All love, all harmony, all union, worthy of the name, is in the knowledge of the Three Persons and One God.

O Thou, Who hidden art in Thine own light,
Blessèd, for ever blessèd Trinity,
We Thy great Name confess,
And trembling seek to know !

O Father, holiest of most holy Thou !
Thou God of very God, eternal Son !
And Thou, in chain of love,
Great Spirit, binding all !

The Father doth Himself behold entire,
From Him the offspring is coeval born ;
And from both, in life-giving love,
God doth Himself proceed.

Thursday of the Fourth Week after Easter.

We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. 2 CORINTHIANS iii. 18.

WHEN our Lord was with His Apostles, there was as it were a veil upon their hearts; but when the blessed Spirit was given, this veil was taken away; from which time they and good Christians are thus described by S. Paul in the text. This is that "Living Way." The "perfect Gift," which is given alone by "the Father of lights," is so much higher and better than anything we can behold on earth, the highest and best of earthly affections. For what could have been more holy and heavenly than that love which the Apostles bore to Christ? To say nothing of the beloved disciple who lay on His Lord's breast; what tender earnest affection does S. Peter often evince? Even S. Thomas, slow to believe, when his Lord was going into danger said, "Let us go, that we may die with Him." In all this there was something of human as well as Divine love; but when the Holy Spirit, coming down from the Father of lights, turned all their hearts to Him Who had ascended into heaven, this was better, more spiritual and Divine, and partook more of the unchangeable, where there is "no variableness, neither shadow of turning." We, all of us, have to go out of the body, to leave it behind us here to decay, before we can be with Christ; and the more we wean our hearts from everything that is transient and visible, the more shall we be prepared to meet that great change.

Remembering that our home is not on earth,
Nor earthy the affections and the joys
Which must make glad that home, with steadfast aim
Pursue our heavenward path, from time to time
Refreshed, in this world's wilderness, by springs
Of worldly joyance; but still looking on
Beyond created things, to that full bliss

Friday of the Fourth Week after Easter.

Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. EPHESIANS iv. 30.

HE has left it in our power to accept or reject Himself, our only and infinite good. He appeals to us with Divine tenderness that we "grieve not the Holy Spirit;" but wherewith can we so grieve Him? Alas that one must, I fear, rather ask, wherein may we not? S. Stephen, "full" as he was "of the Holy Ghost," thus summed up the history of the Jews: "Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost; as your fathers, so do ye." We are surrounded by, immersed in, such an ocean of grace. Day by day it besieges us. There is not an avenue which it does not explore. It, yea rather God, adapts Himself to us. He knows the creatures which He has made. He waiteth for us. Grace comes to us in every way in which it can find us, and mostly in that in which we are most accessible to it. Every good we have done, we have done by its operation; every evil which we have resisted, we have cast it out through that same grace. Since our whole life, day by day and hour by hour, has been set between good and ill, with what a multiplicity of grace has God encompassed us! There is not a thought, good or bad, entertained or dismissed; not a word, kind or unkind, spoken or repressed; not a prayer, said listlessly or with intention of heart, in which grace may not have been busy, accepted, neglected, or refused.

Oh, we have grieved Thee, gracious Spirit!
Wayward, wanton, cold are we;
And still our sins, new every morning,
Never yet have wearied Thee.

Holy Ghost! come down upon Thy children,
Give us grace, and make us Thine;
Thy tender fires within us kindle,
Blessed Spirit! Dove Divine!

Saturday of the Fourth Week after Easter.

Whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. EPHESIANS
iv. 30.

ONLY take, by His help, the first step. "To-day, if ye will hear His voice!" To-day, if in the one next thing you break off some evil or do some good, is a "day of salvation" to you. Pray to persevere, and you will persevere to that day for which He has sealed you, the day of perfect redemption. "Oh, let not that, His seal upon you, the gift of His Spirit, mark you as a deserter. Oh, would that we were worthy, that God should give us tongues of fire," says a holy man, "that we could tell you something fitting, something kindling of that infinite love and loving-kindness of our God! But God alone can teach you how He loves you; He alone can say with power to thy inmost soul, 'I am thy God.' Thy Teacher is within thee, pray Him, listen to Him with a hushed heart, and He in His own time will teach thee. O Holy Creator Spirit, come down once more into our souls in Thine own thrilling fire of life and light and heat, kindling our senses with Thy light, our hearts with Thy love; wash away our stains, bedew our dryness, heal our wounds, bend our stubbornness, guide our wanderings, that Thou being the Inmate of our hearts, the Instructor of our reason, the Strength of our will, we may see by Thy light, Whom as yet we see not, and know Him Who passeth knowledge, and through God may love God, now as wayfarers, and in the day of perfect redemption, in the beatific vision of our God, to Whom, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, be ascribed all honour, power, might, majesty, thanksgiving, and praise for ever and ever. Amen."

Fifth Sunday after Easter.

(Or Rogation Sunday.)

Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world. S. JAMES i. 27.

GOD, Who made all things one over against another, made rich and poor for each other's benefit. The duty of almsgiving is more blessed to us than to them. All which we have is God's; He calls it ours, that we may have the dear happiness of giving it to Him. The poor are more necessary to *us* than we to them. We are necessary to them for their bodies; they are necessary to us for our souls. God has constituted the rich as the representatives, the co-operators with His Providence, and channels of His bounties to the poor; their protectors against the worst temptations to crime for the relief of their indigence. The poor He has constituted the visible representative to the rich of His only-begotten Son, Who being rich, for us men and for our salvation "became poor." Who in *their* earthly lot exalted our human nature to the union with His Divine, gave to it its true surpassing dignity, and now vouchsafes to unite to Himself all human miseries except sin, dignifying each by its relation to Himself, and in the poor accepting as done to Himself what is done to them. Their hands are to us the hands of Christ. The poor stretcheth out his hand; what we give, Christ receives; we give them temporal things, we receive through them eternal. "I remember not," says S. Jerome, "that I ever read of one who died an evil death who had willingly practised deeds of charity; for he hath many intercessors, and it is impossible that the prayers of many should not be heard"

Monday in the Rogation Days.

Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, Who giveth us richly all things to enjoy: laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life. 1 TIMOTHY vi. 17, 19.

S. PAUL here does not contradict what he says, "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ," assuming that this must be in the hearts of all Christians, that Christ is the sole foundation, on Whom and in Whom, if we be His, we alone rest. If we would build solidly on that foundation, the foundation of our building must be love for God, evidenced in love for man. In no other way, he teaches, have the rich a good foundation for life eternal than in rich, glad, much-imparting almsgiving. Where that almsgiving is, there is also that foundation. All whom God admits to His presence, He will admit only for the merits of our Redeemer. But this presupposed. He says that almsgiving stands in direct relation to everlasting bliss. "Through mercy," God says, "iniquity is atoned for," "is redeemed;" "all things," yea, our sins too, are "cleansed to us;" salvation is "come to us;" we "have a strong foundation for life eternal;" "through mercy" we "shall obtain mercy;" "mercy will triumph over" the "judgment" which we have deserved. "God, our Judge," will deliver us "in that" great "day;" mercy "will receive us." Our Saviour and our Judge will bid us

"Come, ye blessed, take the kingdom,"
Shall be there the King's award,
Which for you before the world was
Of My Father was prepared;

I was naked, and ye clothed Me;
Poor, and ye relieved Me; hence
Take the riches of My glory
For your endless recompense.

Tuesday in the Rogation Days.

He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord.
PROVERBS xix. 17.

WHERE is the almsgiving which our Redeemer condescends to solicit of our hands, which He has so blended with His redeeming love, to which He has promised an entrance into His own joy? What we need is alone ours; "our superfluities are the necessities of the poor." God, Who knows the hearts of the rich, leaves us what we need for our health, our wellbeing, nay, our station in society, and the good condition of those, His and our children, whom He has given us. He Who has ordered variety of ranks to serve to His glory, does not call on us to resign what He has lent us, if we wish to retain it. But of that yearly increase He always reserved a portion whereby we should honour Him as our liege Lord, and own ourselves but His tenants at His will. His former people gave Him for His priests or His poor two tenths yearly, and a third tenth every third year. To us He leaves the poor as His representatives, and bids us give them our superfluities. Did He mean, in relaxing the law, to loosen the bonds and duty of charity, of which He gave the example, bared of all things outward, and giving His heart's Blood for us? Is His new commandment, "Love one another, as I have loved you," weaker than the old? He lays down no measure for us, that, giving, as did the early Christians, "to their power, yea, and beyond their power," we might imitate in some measure the measureless love of our God for us.

And with Thy Saints at last
That we, with all the choir above,
May sing Thy power and praise Thy love!

Wednesday in the Rogation Days.

Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me. S. MATTHEW XXV. 40.

WHITED sépulchres are the streets of our cities. They are beautiful outwardly, but within, but a few yards from all that pomp, luxury, and self-indulgence, which sweep unheeding by, Christ, as He Himself says, lies, an hungered, athirst, naked, sick, unvisited. You would not knowingly deck your walls with pictures, while men, the image of God and the representatives of Christ, you clothe not; you would not knowingly multiply delicacies upon yourselves, while men, like yourselves, members of Christ, and Christ in them, is an hungered. God allows you your enjoyments, and, in moderation, your amusements. But He does not allow you superfluities, to supply your passions, to enervate yourselves, to nourish the life of the senses, to dull the fineness of intellect, to strengthen self-indulgence, to injure your moral energy, to unfit you for devotion and self-denying duty. Not things lawful, but things unlawful, dry up charity, because they dry up the heart. The cry of the poor reacheth the ear of God. Let them not cry against you, "Ours is it which ye waste." "Woe to him whom the poor shall implead at the judgment-seat of Christ! Woe to him for whom they shall not plead!" Mercy is the only companion of the departed. Eternally blessed we, if, when our souls were justly forfeited to the strict justice of God, Mercy persuade our Judge to have mercy on us, and He, arrayed in the robe wherewith we have here clothed His poor, say to us—

When ye showed your charity,
Giving bread and home and raiment,
What ye did was done to Me.

Ascension Day.

Jesus appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen Him after He was risen. S.

MARK xvi. 14.

TO-DAY we contemplate our blessed Lord ascending into heaven, and taking His seat at the right hand of God. After He rose from the dead, He continued on earth so long as was necessary to afford sufficient proof of His victory over death, by showing Himself alive to chosen witnesses. When this was done, He at length returned to His glory with the Father. It is humbling to think that after His resurrection His disciples should have given Him occasion to upbraid "them for their unbelief and hardness of heart." These reproaches, however, were not His last words. He was too compassionate to leave His disciples with words of reproof. His last action and last words are, "And He lifted up His hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass, while He blessed them, He was parted from them, and carried up into heaven." He came into the world to bless it, even to bless us, in turning away every one of us from his iniquities. In the act of blessing those whom He had loved and kept so faithfully, He left the world.

'Mid wondering Angels without end,
Th' eternal doors are open wide ;
While Man and God Thou dost ascend,
To set Thee at Thy Father's side.

Our one High Priest, our Advocate,
Our Intercessor there on high,
Offering for us without the gate
The blood of boundless charity.

Thence Thou Thy bride dost here adorn,
And cherish her in her unrest,
And she, when harassed and forlorn,
Reclines upon Thy faithful breast.

Friday after Ascension Day.

And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. EPHESIANS ii. 6.

IN the Communion Service we are exhorted to "lift up our hearts;" we answer, "We lift them up unto the Lord," unto the Lord, that is, Who is ascended on high; to Him Who is not here, but has risen, appeared to His Apostles and retired out of sight. To that ascended and unseen Saviour, Who has overcome death and opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers, this day and all days, but especially at this season, when we commemorate His resurrection and ascension, are we bound to rise in spirit after His pattern. Prayer and fasting have been called the wings of the soul, and they who neither fast nor pray cannot follow Christ. They cannot lift up their hearts to Him. They have no treasure above. It is the duty and the privilege of all disciples of our glorified Saviour to be exalted and transfigured with Him; to live in heaven in their thoughts, motives, aims, desires, likings, prayers, praises, intercessions, even while they are in the flesh; to look like other men, to be busy like other men, to be passed over in the crowd of men, or even to be scorned or oppressed as other men may be, but the while to have a secret channel of communication with the Most High, a gift the world knows not of; to have their life hid with Christ in God.

Where Thou our Head art gone before,
Do Thou to Thee the body draw,
On ways where Thine own steps of yore
Have trod Thine own life-giving Law.

Now to the Father let us sing,
And Holy Spirit, unto Thee,
And to our heaven-ascended King,
Who captive led captivity.

Saturday after Ascension Day.

The world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not. 1 S.
JOHN iii. 1.

OR, more than this, we may be perhaps ridiculed for our religion, despised, or punished. "If they have called the Master of the house Beelzebub, how much more them of His household?" Such is the condition of those who have risen with Christ. He rose in the night, when no one saw Him, and we, too, rise we know not when and how. Nor does any one know anything of our religious history, of our turnings to God, of our growings in grace, of our success, but God Himself, Who secretly is the cause of them. The world witnesses not the secret communion of the Saints of God, their prayers, praises, and intercessions. But they have the present privileges of Saints notwithstanding—a knowledge, a joy, and a strength which they cannot compass or describe, and would not if they could. Oh how plentiful is Thy goodness, which Thou hast laid up for them that fear Thee; and that Thou hast prepared for them that put their trust in Thee, even before the sons of men. Are they in anxiety? "Thou shalt hide them privily by Thine own presence from the provoking of all men. Thou shalt keep them secretly in Thy tabernacle from the strife of tongues." Do thou

Then look for all thy comforts there,
With thyself, and with thy God,
Delight to make thy chief abode;
There repose secure and free,
And no mischance can trouble thee.

Thy Lord that feeds thee now
With His own Flesh shall more bestow.
He came down to be like thee,
Thou shalt go up and like Him be.

Sunday after the Ascension Day.

The end of all things is at hand. I S. PETER iv. 7.

WHEN our Lord ascended into heaven the Angels spake of His return, "He shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven." And indeed our thoughts of His departure are necessarily connected with the subject of His coming again. Scripture is wont to combine the two events together. It was just before His leaving His disciples that they asked Him whether He was then about to restore the kingdom to Israel; for all His preparations looked so like some immediate manifestation of Himself, when He told them that times and seasons were the secret of God, but that they were immediately by the descent of the Holy Ghost to prepare the way. All things in Scripture, all things in nature, all things in the world around, point, as with the finger, to this the Lord's return. And the rapidity with which we seem to pass one after another from this visible scene, suggests to a thoughtful mind that the great winding up of all is to be very soon. Well therefore does our Church on this Sunday take up the warning note with which the Epistle for to-day commences, "Be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer." What better can express the feelings which they ought to have, who after gazing on their Lord ascending into heaven, turn their eyes again down to earth, with the Angels' words in their ears, "Above all things have fervent charity among yourselves"? This brotherly love is the great requisite in preparations for the Last Day; for without it watchfulness and prayer are of no avail, or rather cannot exist, but

The more by thought thou leav'st the crowd behind,
Draw near by deeper love to all thy kind;
So shall thy heart in lowly peace be still,
And earthly wisdom serve a Heavenly will.

Monday after Ascension Day.

And then shall they see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. S. LUKE xxi. 27.

IF we would be among those who are gathered together by the holy Angels to the Body of our Lord, when He shall come in a cloud with power and great glory, we must be careful that we are now gathered together in unity and love in that mystical Body the Church, which is one with Him and He with it. For what, says a father, is Holy Church, except the Body of its own heavenly Head? Wherein one is the eye, by beholding lofty things; another a hand, by performing right things; another a foot, by running to and fro at command; another an ear, by understanding the voice of the precepts; another a nose, by discerning the foulness of wicked and the fragrance of good deeds. And while they receive and discharge mutual offices, like the limbs of the body, they make of themselves together one single Body; and while they perform different offices in charity, they keep that from being different in which they are bound together. There is nothing that a Christian ought so to dread as to be separated from the Body of Christ, since if he be separated from the Body of Christ he is not a member of Him, and if not a member of Him he is not quickened by His Spirit.

Holy Jesus, when our power
Fails us in temptation's hour,
All unequal to the strife,
Thou to aid us art the Life.

Tuesday after Ascension Day.

To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame and am set down with My Father in His throne. REVELATION iii. 21.

It will be well for us to take this lesson to ourselves, and learn that great truth which the Apostles shrank from at first but at length rejoiced in, Christ suffered and entered into joy; so did they in their measure after Him, and in our measure so do we. It is written that "through much tribulation we must enter into the kingdom of God." God has all things in His own hands. He can spare, He can inflict. He often spares; (may He spare us still!) but He often tries us, in one way or another He tries every one. At some time or other of the life of every one there is pain and sorrow and trouble. So it is; and the sooner perhaps we can look upon it as a law of our Christian condition the better. One generation comes and then another. They issue forth and succeed like leaves in spring, and in all this law is observable. They are tried, and then they triumph; they are humbled, and then they sit down on Christ's throne.

O Jesus, Lord—the Way, the Truth,
The Life, the Crown of all
Who here on earth confess Thy Name—
O hear us when we call!

We bring to mind with grateful joy
Thy servants who of old
Withstood the snares of earth and hell,
And now Thy Face behold.

Who sought on earth the joys of prayer,
And that communion knew
Which Saints and Angels share above
With those who seek it too.

Vouchsafe us, Lord, we pray Thee now,
To us it may be given,
Like them to live and die in Thee,
And with them rise to heaven.

Wednesday after Ascension Day.

Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us. HEBREWS xii. 1.

THE whole Church, all elect souls, each in its turn, is called to this necessary work. Once it was the turn of others, and now it is our turn. Once it was the Apostles' turn. It was S. Paul's turn once. He had all cares on him all at once; covered from head to foot with cares, as Job with sores. And as if all this was not enough, he had a thorn in the flesh added. Yet he did his part well. He was as a strong wrestler in his day, and at the close he was able to say, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." After him the excellent of the earth, the white-robed army of martyrs, the cheerful company of confessors, each in his turn down to this very time, first one and then another, have been called out to exhibit before the Great King. Such is our state. Angels are looking on. Christ has gone before. Christ has given us an example that we may follow His steps. He went through infinitely more than we can be called upon to suffer. Our brethren have gone through much more, and they encourage us by their success.

Tell me, you bright stars that shine
Round about the Lamb's high throne,
How, through bodies once like mine,
How are you thus glorious grown?

Hark, with one voice they reply,
This was all our happy skill:
We on Jesus fixed our eye,
And His eminent followers, still.

We arrived at this bright place;
Follow us, and never fear.

Thursday after Ascension Day.

Looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith, Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame. HEBREWS xii. 2.

Now it is our turn (to fight), and all ministering spirits keep silence and look on. Oh, let not your foot slip, or your eye be false, or your ear dull, or your attention flagging! Be not dispirited; be not afraid; keep a good heart; be bold; draw not back; you will be carried through. Whatever troubles come on you, of body, mind, or estate; from within or from without; from accident or from intent; from friends or foes; whatever your trouble be, though you be lonely, O children of a heavenly Father, look unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith, Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, and despised the shame. Be not afraid, quit you like men in your day; and when it is over, Christ will receive you to Himself, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.

Think ye the spires that glow so bright
In front of yonder setting sun,
Stand by their own unshaken might?
No; where th' upholding grace is won,
We dare not ask, nor Heaven would tell,
But sure from many a hidden dell,
From many a rural nook unthought of there
Rises for that proud world the Saints' prevailing prayer.

On, champions blest! in Jesus' Name
Short be your strife, your triumph full,
Till every heart have caught your flame,
And, lightened of the world's misrule,
Ye soar those elder Saints to meet,
Gathered long since at Jesus' Feet,
No world of passions to destroy,
Your prayers and struggles o'er, your task all praise and joy.

Friday before Whist Sunday.

And is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.
HEBREWS xii. 2.

CHRIST is already in the place of peace, which is all in all. He is on the right hand of God. He is hidden in the brightness of the radiance which issues from the everlasting throne. He is in the very abyss of peace, where there is no voice of tumult or distress, but a deep stillness—stillness, that greatest and most awful of all goods which we can fancy; that most perfect of joys, the utter, profound, ineffable tranquillity of the Divine Essence. He has entered into His rest. Oh how great a good will it be if, when this troublesome life is over, we in our turn also enter into that same rest; if the time shall one day come when we shall enter into His tabernacle above, and hide ourselves under the shadow of His wings; if we shall be in the number of those blessed dead who die in the Lord, and rest from their labour! Here we are tossing upon the sea, and the wind is contrary. All through the day we are tried and tempted in various ways. We cannot think, speak, or act, but infirmity and sin are at hand. But in the unseen world,

Above noise and danger,
Sweet Peace sits crowned with smiles,
And One born in a manger
Commands the beauteous files.

He is thy gracious Friend,
And (O my soul, awake!)
Did in pure love descend
To die here for thy sake.

If thou canst get but thither,
There grows the flower of peace,
The Rose that cannot wither,
Thy fortress, and thy ease!

The Vigil of Whitsun Day.

They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. There shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither any more pain: for the former things are passed away. REVELATION vii. 16, xxi. 4.

NOR any more sin, nor any more guilt; no more remorse, no more punishment, no more penitence, no more trial; no infirmity to depress us; no affection to mislead us; no passion to transport us; no prejudice to blind us; no sloth, no pride, no envy, no strife, but the light of God's countenance, and a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne. That is our *home*; here we are but on pilgrimage, and Christ is calling us home. He calls us to His many mansions, which He has prepared. And the Spirit and the Bride call us too, and all things will be ready for us by the time of our coming. "Seeing then that we have a great High Priest that has passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession;" seeing we have "so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight;" "let us labour to enter into our rest." Let us come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Wake now, my soul, and humbly hear
What thy mild Lord commands;
Each word of His will charm thine ear,
Each word will guide thy hands.
Hark! how His sweet and tender care
Complies with our weak minds;
Whate'er our state and tempers are,
Still some fit work He finds.

Whitsun Day.

If ye love Me, keep My commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever ; even the Spirit of truth ; Whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him : but ye know Him ; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. S. JOHN xiv. 15-17.

EACH festival of the mysteries of our faith is in turn the greatest, and all alike are equal. Each seemeth for the time the greatest, for each bringeth to our nothingness the Infinity of God. All are alike equal, for all relate to that Infinity, in which there are no degrees, no parts, no more or less, no bounds, no beginnings, no end, no time. But God, in Himself infinite, unchangeable, and one, shows Himself to His creatures in degree and measure, and divides as it were His ineffable light in the bow which is around the throne ; so may we, who cannot behold His glory Who sitteth thereon, as *He is*, behold His beauty and love parted in the varied lines of that mercy which droppeth from above. To-day is the filling up of the Ascension. The wondrous exchange was half made on the Ascension, when Man in God was taken up into heaven, and sat on His Father's throne ; the day of Pentecost fulfilled the promise of the Father, and as man now dwelt in God, so God, in a new and ineffable way, dwelt thenceforth in man. On this day God sent us God the Holy Spirit, to dwell really, truly, substantially, in the souls of men, not by mere gifts and graces, however great, but by Himself. As truly as the soul dwells in the body, even so God the Holy Ghost dwells truly and really in the hearts of the faithful, is the Life of the soul itself, unites them to Christ, is the Fountain of all graces.

Truest Sun, upon us stream
With Thy calm perpetual beam,
In the Spirit's still sunshine
Making sense and thought divine.

Monday in Whitsun Week.

He [Jesus] breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost. S. JOHN xx. 22.

AFTER our Lord's Ascension He shed forth this gift upon His people, to continue as the heritage of each succeeding generation of the Church until the end of time. He had promised His own presence with them for ever, and thus He gave it to them; for the Holy Ghost is one God with the Father and the Son. Thus is the Church, by communion from her risen Lord, filled with the Holy Ghost. As the Body of Christ, she is made "the temple of the Holy Ghost," and all the ministerial acts of the Church are done by the power of the Holy Ghost. Therefore are the two clauses of the Creed joined together, "I believe in the Holy Ghost, and the Holy Catholic Church." This unseen indwelling presence is the source of unity. We are brought into the one Church by being "baptized into" this one Spirit, for it is the inward life-giving energy of the "one outward Body." We are kept in the unity of the Church by the various ordinances appointed for "the ministration of the Spirit." This presence, making the Church of Christ something different from any mere company of men, makes it to be an object of faith. We believe that all members of the Holy Catholic Church are joined together in one unseen Body by the presence of the Holy Ghost, and that this presence fills the Church with Divine powers for the performance of her work, in bringing many sons unto glory.

To Him be endless glory, honour, power,
Who to all men that serve Him faithfully
In every clime the Spirit's aid vouchsafes.
Meekly, with one accord the wondrous gift we seek,
That He the Holy Ghost our inmost hearts
First cleansing, with all wisdom may enlighten.

Tuesday in Whitsun Week.

If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him? S. LUKE xi. 13.

HE not only gave, He poured forth, poured out the Holy Spirit, that His love might through Him be poured out, in an overflowing stream, into our hearts; We should of ourselves have beheld, cold and unmoved, our Saviour's love. But that this might not be He giveth us His Spirit. "Christ," saith one who loved much, "dieth and deserveth to be loved. The Spirit touches the heart and causeth Him to be loved. Christ doth that for which He should be loved; the Spirit that whereby He should be loved. Christ commendeth His exceeding love in us; the Spirit giveth it also. In Christ we see what we should love; from the Spirit we receive whence we should love. From Christ, then, is the occasion of love; from the Spirit the affection. Now, since 'the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost Which is given us,' being loved, we love; loving, are fitted to be yet more loved."

Light of Light, O shine, we pray,
In our inmost hearts to-day.

Like the rose's perfume
In some woodland grot,
Thou art present, Jesu,
Yet we see Thee not.
Rose of Sharon ever blest,
Be our Joy, our Hope, our Rest.

Whom the ear perceives not,
Eye may not behold;
How the hearts of children
Lovingly enfold;
We believe with holy fear,
Seeing not, we feel Thee here.

Wednesday in Whitsun Week.

(Ember Day.)

The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God.
I CORINTHIANS ii. 14.

IF a parent bestows property on a child, it is of no avail unless he provides him also with a guardian. So the Paraclete is to the regenerate in Christ a Guardian and a Comforter. Therefore by the Holy Spirit in baptism we are regenerated unto life, after baptism we are confirmed for the conflict; in baptism we are nourished, after baptism we are strengthened. What the Apostles gained by the coming of the Holy Spirit, our Lord Himself clearly explains: "When He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth." When the Holy Spirit is infused, the faithful heart is expanded to prudence and constancy. Accordingly, before the descent of the Holy Spirit, the Apostles are driven by terror even to denial; but after His visitation they are armed with indifference for their own safety, even to martyrdom. Hereby we learn that we are redeemed by Christ, but it is by the Holy Spirit that we are illuminated with the gift of heavenly wisdom, are built up, are taught, that we may be able to hear that voice of the Holy Spirit, "I will give them understanding, and instruct thee in the way in which thou shalt go." It is from the Holy Spirit that we receive the gift of being made spiritual. It is from the Holy Spirit that we receive the intelligence to discern between good and evil, to love what is righteous, to reject what is unrighteous. It is from the Holy Spirit that we receive the power of being enkindled with the love of life and the ardour for glory, so as to be able to lift up our minds from things earthly to things heavenly and Divine.

Thou my mind dost raise
To airs of spheres, yes, and to Angels' lays.

Thursday in Whitsun Week.

Live according to God in the Spirit. I S. PETER iv. 6.

As warmth is inseparable from fire and brightness from light, so are the qualities of hallowing and giving life, of goodness and rectitude, from the Spirit. There the Spirit has His station, there is the blessed nature of God; not reckoned as one of a multitude, but contemplated as one of the Trinity; proclaimed in His singleness, not included in any combinations. For as the Father is one, and the Son is one, so also is the Holy Spirit one. It is the Spirit that fills angels, fills archangels, hallows powers, gives life to all. He is nowise diminished by those that share Him. To all He gives the grace which proceeds from Him, but He is not spent on His receivers; on the contrary, while they that take Him are filled, He Himself lacks nothing. He illuminates all men for the knowledge of God. He inspires prophets; He gives wisdom to lawgivers, consecrates priests, strengthens kings, perfects just men, gives dignity to the self-controlled, works gifts of healing, gives life to the dead, releases the fettered, adopts the aliens into sonship. This He works through the birth from above. If He finds a believing publican, He makes him an evangelist; if He meets with a fisherman, He makes him a divine; if He encounters a persecutor in his repentance, He makes him an apostle. Through Him the unskilled in argument are wiser than the wise. He abides in heaven and fills the earth, is everywhere present and nowhere circumscribed. He dwells entire in each one, and is entire with God. He does not administer His gifts ministerially, but distributes His grace with sovereign power. For He divides "to each severally as He wills."

Thy Spirit's wondrous power,
Whose work is mightiest in our weakest hour.

Friday in Whitsun Week.

(Ember Day.)

Be led of the Spirit. GALATIANS v. 18.

THE soul that is enriched by the indwelling of the Spirit, that soul's desire is to desire nothing, its will to will for nothing, its care to care for nothing, its wealth to possess nothing, out of God, its one, its everlasting Treasure. This is the experience of those who have heard within themselves that there is a Holy Ghost. This is the subjective side of lives which have been spent in the purest and most unselfish benevolence, but the secret of whose strength has escaped the notice of ordinary lookers-on. No changes of human opinion can affect the irrevocable gifts of God. One day we shall look back upon its blessed opportunities, upon its high responsibilities, with what feelings of self-reproach or of gratitude, who shall say? Let us be wise while we may.

The first step of Christian lore
Is to depart from sin :
True faith will leave the world no more
A place thy heart within.
Thy Saviour's Spirit first
The heavy bonds must burst
Wherein death bound thee in thy need.
Then the freed spirit knows
What strength He gives to those
Who with their Lord are risen indeed ;
And what Thy Spirit, Lord, began,
Help Thou with inner might !

Give strength, whene'er our strength must fail,
Give strength the flesh to curb ;
Give strength when craft and sin prevail
To weaken and disturb.
The world doth lay her snares
To catch us unawares,
Give strength to sweep them all away ;
So in our utmost need,
And when death come indeed,
Thy strength shall be our perfect stay.

Saturday in Whitsun Week.

(Ember Day.)

Renew a right spirit within me. PSALM li. 10.

LET us daily invite the Holy Spirit's presence by purity of action and purity of heart. For we ought to be so pure and cleansed in thought and feeling, to keep such watch over lips and heart, that we may make ourselves always worthy of His visitation, and be found free from all uncleanness of thought, seeing that "froward thoughts separate from God." Let us take pains to be free from all detraction and all malice, for into a malicious soul wisdom shall not enter, nor dwell in a body that "is subject unto sin." Through anger and pride are the souls of the negligent stripped of the Holy Spirit's watchful protection. Let us not then grieve Him by such passions; but rather through the grace of humility and gentle peace call Him to take His seat in our hearts, and gladden Him by our good works and our progress in piety; for He Himself says, "Upon whom shall I rest, save upon him that is humble, and quiet, and that trembleth at My words?" If we then desire to secure the entrance of so great a visitor, let us first cleanse the house of our soul from the unworthy passions of carnal lust, from abominable pride, from loathsome arrogance, from horrible lukewarmness. Let us therefore prepare this house *daily* for the coming of the sacred King, and adorn it with the varied flowers of an approved life. Let us fill it with the pleasant and precious odours of chastity, the incense of faith, the balsam of benevolence, and the fragrant fumes of charity; so that vices may be cut off and virtues planted, and thus we may be changed into the temple of God, that this blessed Guest, well pleased with so fair a lodging, may make in us His constant and perpetual abode. For this was the object of His descent to us, that we might be able to ascend to Him,

Brought forth from out a deep captivity.

Trinity Sunday.

Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Hosts. ISAIAH vi. 3.

EVERY Lord's day is a day of rest, this more than any. It commemorates not an act of God, however gracious and glorious, but His own unspeakable perfection and adorable mysteriousness. A day especially sacred to peace. Our Lord left His peace when He went away. "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you : not as the world giveth, give I unto you." He said He would send a Comforter, Who should give them peace. Last week we commemorated the Comforter's coming; to-day, in an especial way, the gift He brought with Him in that great doctrine which is its emblem and its means. "These things I have spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation." Instead of this world's troubles, He gives His disciples peace, and accordingly in to-day's Collect we pray that we may be kept in the faith of the eternal Trinity and Unity, and be defended "from all adversities;" for in keeping that faith we are kept from trouble. Again in the solemn form of blessing with which our public service ends, "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding," and the blessing of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. God is the God of peace, and in giving us peace He does but give Himself, He does but manifest Himself to us; for His presence is peace.

What then am I, my God,
Permitted thus the paths of peace to tread?
Peace, purchased by the Blood
Of Him Who had not where to lay His Head!
I, who once made Him grieve;
I, who once bid His gentle spirit mourn;
Whose hand essayed to weave
For His meek Brow the cruel crown of thorns;
O why should I have peace?
Why but for that unchanging, undying love
Which would not, could not cease,
Until it made me heir of joys above.

Monday after Trinity Sunday.

Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe. S. JOHN
iv. 48.

WE have now celebrated the last great festival in the course of holy services which began in Advent; the Feast of the ever-blessed Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, Whose mercy has planned, accomplished, and wrought in us "life and immortality." And the present festival has this peculiarity in it, that it is the commemoration of a mystery. Other festivals celebrate mysteries also, but not because they are mysteries. The annunciation, the birth of Christ, His death on the Cross, His resurrection, the descent of the Holy Ghost, are all mysteries; but we celebrate them not on this account, but for the blessings which we gain from them. But now we celebrate, not an act of God's mercy towards us, but, forgetting ourselves and looking only upon Him, we reverently and awfully, yet joyfully, extol the wonders, not of His works, but of His own nature. We lift up heart and eyes towards Him, and speak of what He is Himself. We dare to speak of His everlasting and infinite Essence. We directly contemplate a mystery, the deep unfathomable mystery of the Trinity in Unity. Doubtless, from that deep mystery proceeds all that is to benefit and bless us. Without an Almighty Son we are not redeemed; without an ever-present Spirit we are not justified and sanctified, yet (at this time) we celebrate the mystery for its own sake, not for our sake. Then we should forget ourselves, and fix our thoughts on God. Yet men are not willing to forget themselves; they do not like to become as it were nothing, and to have no work but faith.

Three in One, and One in Three !
Here by faith we worship Thee ;
With the Saints hereafter we
Hope to bear the palm.

Tuesday after Trinity Sunday.

For we walk by faith. 2 CORINTHIANS v. 7.

WE learn from the Festival of the Blessed Trinity in Unity to walk by faith, that is, not to ask jealously and coldly for strict argument, but to follow generously what has fair evidence for it, even though it might have more systematic evidence. It is in this way that we believe that there is a God. Our very state and warfare is one of faith. Let us reach after and, as it were, catch at the things of the next world. There is a voice within us which assures us that there is something higher than earth. There is that in our hearts which prompts us to religion, and which condemns and chastises sin. This yearning of our nature is met and sustained, it finds an object to rest upon, when it hears of the existence of an all-powerful, all-gracious Creator. It excites us to a noble faith in what we cannot see. Believe : evidence will come after faith as its reward, better than before it as its groundwork. Faith soars aloft ; it listens for the notes of heaven, the faint voices or echoes which scarcely reach the earth, and it thinks them worth all the louder sounds of cities or of schools of men. Let us embrace the sacred mystery of the Trinity in Unity, which, as the Creed tells us, is the ground of the Catholic religion. Let us think it far too great a privilege for sinners such as we are, for a fallen people in a degenerate age, to inherit the faith once delivered to the Saints ; let us accept it thankfully ; let us guard it watchfully ; let us transmit it faithfully to those who come after us, bearing in mind that

The greater height [our] graces reach,
The clearer they the mystery teach ;
Saints best in their own souls may read
The illustration of their creed.

Wednesday after Trinity Sunday.

For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one. I S. JOHN
v. 7.

LET us examine ourselves, that we may see how mightily this doctrine of the Holy Trinity bears on our hearts and minds. It is a doctrine vast and all-important; it is the very foundation of our faith, the very groundwork of our religion. Religion is that which binds us to God. This doctrine of the Holy Trinity tells us about God; explains to us, so far as we can know it, the nature of God. Oh, then, let us "hold fast the form of sound words which we have heard." It is a precious legacy which has been handed down to us from the first; for "this is the Catholic faith;" that is, this is the faith of the Church of Christ in all ages and in all lands. Let us very earnestly pray and strive to keep this faith whole and undefiled. "The Holy Church throughout all the world doth acknowledge Thee; the Father of an infinite Majesty; Thine honourable, true, and only Son; also the Holy Ghost, the Comforter." May we never speak on subjects like this without awe. May we never dispute without charity. May we never inquire without a careful endeavour with God's aid to sanctify our knowledge, and to impress it on our hearts as well as to store it in our understandings.

Eternal One, Almighty Trine!
(Since Thou art ours, and we are Thine,)
By all Thy love did once resign,

By all the grace Thy heavens still hide,
We pray Thee, keep us at Thy side,
Creator, Saviour, strengthening Guide!

Thursday after Trinity Sunday.

And the Apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith. S.
LUKE xvii. 5.

THE promise which God has made of hearing us proves the desire which He has to give us. Put all your confidence in God. "Lord, increase our faith," was the cry of the Apostles. Do thou the same. Cry on, looking to Him alone, "Good Jesus, have mercy on me; Lord, have mercy upon me; Christ, have mercy upon me;" and whatever be thy blindness, Jesus will at the fitting time touch thine eyes and thou shalt see. Whatever thy coldness, He will kindle thy soul. Though it were dead and buried, He would raise it up. Mourn not, and fret not, whatever grace or faith or token of God's love, or hope that thou lovest Him, thou seemest not to have. Let every aching of thy heart be a cry for mercy, for He has said, "Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it." He will give thee more than thou dardest ask or think. Seek not to gain it for thyself; but ask of Him, the Fountain of all goodness, Who giveth to every man liberally and upbraideth not, and He will give it thee. He will give thee light for darkness; life for deadness of soul; faith for blinded sight; for coldness of heart, love. He will set thee free from the bonds of sin and sense, and wing thy soul, that, through faith and love, it may mount up, yea, be caught up even to Himself.

Triune God, as we adore,
So be Thou our Guest;
On Thy paths for evermore
Lead us to Thy rest.
From our gloom to infinite
Everlasting light;
From our loud tumultuous round
To thy calm profound.

Friday after Trinity Sunday.

I live ; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me. GALATIANS ii. 20.

FAITH is, from first to last, the gift of God. Whatever precedes, accompanies, follows faith, is of Him. Faith living by love and ending in everlasting peace, is from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. Its first beginnings are in His forecoming mercy and grace. Its growth through His love, which "He hath shed abroad in our hearts, through the Holy Ghost Which He hath given us." Perseverance to the end is faith, is His crowning gift. Faith rests not on reasoning or proof, although it uses them ; it sees the Unseen, the Invisible. It sees, because it believes, because it loves. It goes a directer way. It lives in heaven. It sees, where it lives and loves. Earth-born clouds hide not its Object from it. It lives above the mists of worldly passions, cares, distractions, in the serene light of love. The heart's deep fervent gaze strengthens its vision, clears what was confused ; penetrates what afore was hidden. Love cleanseth its eye, and it beholdeth God. It believes, loves, sees, because He the Object of its belief, and love reveals Himself unto it ; yea, comes, as He has promised, unto it and makes His abode in it. Love, then, is the life of faith ; obedience, the life of love. Yea, rather, Christ Himself is the life of the soul. Christ liveth in our hearts by faith, and that presence He promiseth to those that love Him and keep His commandments. Wouldest thou have faith and love ? wouldest thou that they should revive, grow, be perfected ? Obey. For to obedience Christ has promised His presence. His presence is "comfort, life, and fire of love ;" the fountain of holiness ; the death of sin and self-love ; wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption ; for it is the fulness of Him in Whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

Glory to Him from Whom all blessings flow.

Saturday after Trinity Sunday:

If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. GALATIANS v. 25.

MEN would take a shorter course, they would excite their own faith, their own love. It seems to them a strange way to fast, give alms, deny themselves, be less absorbed in outward things, less careful as to comforts, rise betimes for prayer, that they may grow in faith and love. Yet it is the way of God. Ye yourselves, who had once a stronger, loving faith, know too well how ye lost it as your love of the world grew. Your faith was buried in the things of time; the love of man's praise, and self-indulgence blunted it; things of sense became more solid, things unseen more distant; life, which is a dream, became real; God, the only reality, a dream. Would ye have again implicit faith, simple love, step by step return. Step by step ye have lost your way amid the vanities of the world, step by step ye must retrace it. Take the first step in the Name of God and in His strength, in real, earnest longing for the sight of His blissful Countenance in love. Faint, slight wavering though it be, yet do it for the love of God. Break off some one evil, cut off some one self-indulgence, deny yourself some one vanity; give, for the love of God, larger alms; do it as an offering to God, for the love of God, and some gleam of faith, life, and love will stream down upon thy soul from the everlasting Fount of love. Follow on and thou shalt never lose that track of light. For it is a ray from His undying love; light from the unvarying, unchanging Father of lights; an earnest of His beatific vision in eternal light, when faith and sight and hope shall be absorbed in

Love, and unveiled truth doth feed for aye,
And ye drink full of joy's o'erflowing wells.

First Sunday after Trinity.

Beloved, let us love one another. 1 S. JOHN iv. 7.

WHY? "for love is of God;" for love is of all things the most Divine—the peculiar gift of God, the very mark of God's children. "Every one that loveth is born of God," and "knoweth God." He has that intimate vital union with God which, for want of a higher term to express it, is called knowledge, though it passeth all understanding. This knowledge and love are indeed so united that they are like light and heat from one and the same flame. The more strongly to ensure this subject of love he puts the negative also: "He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is Love." This last expression is far more than all; he does not say that God is loving, or that He delights in love, or that He is the Author of love, but that He is Love. "If nothing else," says S. Augustine, "were said of love in the Scriptures, yet if the Spirit told us this only, that Love is God, we ought to require nothing more." How much does it contain! for if God is Love, then whenever we sin against Love in thought, word, or deed, in any matter, we sin against God.

Ah! earnest Christian,
Hast thou within thy breast
Sweet charity so meek and mild,
Thy gentle constant-loving guest?
If in thy spirit she abide,
Envy no more with thee will stay,
No angry passions in thee hide,
And malice all will pass away.
Then wilt thou know all lovely things,
Wilt learn to suffer and forgive,
And she will bear thee on her wings
Almost to where the Angels live.
If not as yet her home be there,
Oh, rest not till she dwells in thee;
Thy Father seek in fervent prayer,
And ask for holy charity.

First Monday after Trinity.

In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. 1 S. JOHN iv. 9.

HERE S. John gives us the living proof and evidence of the love of God in sending "His only begotten Son into the world," that we in His life might have life, that in His love we might have love. This His love was manifested; it was not, like an unseen emotion of the mind, dead and inoperative, but showed itself indeed; nor was it like the mere return of love such as we find among mankind, but it was love in an infinitely higher, truer, better sense—love itself, essential love. Hating sin so much, yet so much did He love the sinner; how much more then will He love us, if sin be away, buried in the grave of Christ, and we are in Christ, the Beloved of the Father!

O love of God, how strong and true !
Eternal and yet ever new,
Uncomprehended and unbought,
Beyond all knowledge and all thought !

O love of God, how deep and great !
Far deeper than man's deepest hate ;
Self-fed, self-kindled like the light,
Changeless, eternal, infinite !

We read thee best in Him Who came
To bear for us the cross of shame,
Sent by the Father from on high,
Our life to live, our death to die.

We read Thy power to bless and save,
Even in the darkness of the grave ;
Still more in resurrection light
We read the fulness of Thy might.

O love of God, our shield and stay
Through all the perils of our way ;
Eternal love, in thee we rest,
For ever safe, for ever blest !

First Tuesday after Trinity.

If God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and His love is perfected in us. Hereby know we that we dwell in Him, and He in us, because He hath given us of His Spirit. 1 S. JOHN iv. 11-13.

WE are loved of God ; if we have any love for Him in return, we love what He loves ; we have no other way of showing our love for Him. We cannot behold God ; but what we have beheld is inconceivable. Love, in the countenance, in the words, in the sufferings of the Son of Man ; and He by His Spirit dwelleth in us, and perfects His love in us. If we have this fruit of the Spirit, for the Holy Spirit is love, then we have a pledge and assurance of this His indwelling, this our living union with Him ; according to the promise which Christ hath made, that He will send the Holy Spirit, that He Himself will abide with us. By love bearing witness on our words and actions, written as on the "fringes" and phylacteries of our garments, we know that He hath given us of His Spirit. All this, the chain of love, the breath of our life, and the light of heaven, depends on our sustaining in our souls by obedience the doctrine of the Three Persons in One God, into which life-giving Name we are baptized. This mystery of Godhead is ever recurring, all things connected with it flowing from it, returning to it, the centre and circumference of all. By brotherly love we know we have the Spirit, by the gift of the Spirit we know that we have the indwelling of God ; by acknowledging the Father we confess the Son, by confessing the Son we have God dwelling in us and we in Him.

All the Godhead joins to make us whole,
The triple crown of mercy now
Is ready for the suppliant's brow,
By the Almighty Three for ever planned,
And from behind the cloud held out by Jesus' hand.

First Wednesday after Trinity.

There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear. 1 S.
JOHN iv. 18.

It is fear indeed which urges to repentance, and repentance kindles love; but such partakes of servile bondage rather than the filial spirit of adoption; it is as the scourge, or remedy, or the pruning-knife, which becomes less and less needed as love is perfected. Fear is the forecasting of evil; but he whose heart is by love established feareth no evil, for God is with him. It hath no fear except the godly, loving fear of displeasing Him, which fear hath in it nothing of torment, but ever grows with growing love. Ask not how the love of God is taught. It is neither the fruit nor the effects of reasoning, it is in the heart and not in the mind that grace lights up this sacred fire. Love is the only feeling which makes our Lord's yoke easy to us, and His burden light. Fear causes us to feel the whole weight of the law: hope lightens it but in part; love alone bids it disappear. "Who loves, labours not," says S. Augustine. This love is purer in proportion as the heart becomes more detached from its own interests, and tends towards the object it loves, without looking back on itself. This purity of love is the point to which God continually strives to raise the soul that has given itself to Him; favours and trials and sacrifices all combine to purify its love and cleanse it from all alloy.

Until Thy presence for our shame
A sheltering robe shall prove,
And Thy redeemed released from blame
Shall mirror all Thy love.

First Thursday after Trinity.

If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar : for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God Whom he hath not seen ? 1 S. JOHN iv. 20.

THE Christian law is a law of love ; it is all comprised in the love of God. We are bound to love Him for Himself, and to love ourselves in Him, and our neighbour for Him. God is the one principle, and aim, and end of all ; and love, says S. Augustine, is the only worship He exacts and accepts. Faith alone does not honour Him ; the devils believe and tremble. Hope without love is insufficient, because it pauses at God's promises without advancing to Himself. Charity (love) only reaches Him, is united to Him, and rests in Him as in supreme Good. What avails the practice of exterior works, if not animated and quickened by the heart ? Men pay attention to demonstrations and judge of the heart by them, because they cannot look deeper. But God looks upon the heart, and according to the state of the heart He values all things else. He sees all things ; not only actions, but most secret thoughts. He sees good, approves and rewards it ; He sees evil, condemns and punishes it ; rules all according to His eternal designs.

O Thou Who keep'st the key of Love,
Open Thy fount, eternal Dove,
And overflow this heart of mine,
Enlarging as it fills with Thee,
Till in one blaze of charity
Care and remorse are lost, like motes in light Divine.

Till, as each moment wafts us higher,
By every gush of pure desire,
And high-breathed hope of joys above,
By every secret sigh we heave,
Whole years of folly we outlive,
For His unerring sight, Who measures Life by Love.

First Friday after Trinity.

And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. COLOSSIANS iii. 14.

CHARITY is created love coming forth from the Uncreated, "shed abroad in our hearts" by Him Who is Uncreated Love. Love is that which is most akin to that which God is. Love unites man to God. Love lifts men to heaven, because it is of God, as it bowed God down to earth to have pity on our miseries and sins. Love is the return and flowing back of the love of God. "We love Him because He first loved us." He loved us with an infinite love. He would have us return a whole undivided love, the whole love of man for the whole Infinite love of God. It loves, in its height, God Himself for Himself, because He is what He is, even as (if we may reverently say it) God Almighty loves Himself, because He is Himself, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, the One Object of all perfect love. It loves His holy creatures, Angels and Archangels, because they love Him, and His love rests upon them. It loves the Church, because it is His Body. It loves those who love Christ, because Christ loveth them; it loves those who love Him not, because He willeth them to be saved. It joys in penitents, as He said, "Rejoice with Me, for I have found the sheep which I had lost;" in the purity of innocents, in whom Christ "seeth of the travail of His soul and is satisfied." It "weeps with those who weep." They love all whom God loveth, because God loves them, and they love Him in them.

Leave me, O love! which reachest but to dust;
And thou my mind, aspire to higher things,
Grow rich in that which never taketh rust.

Eternal Love, maintain thy life in me.

First Saturday after Trinity.

The Lord make you to increase in love. I THESSALONIANS
iii. 12.

THAT love which gives the value to all deeds of faith, or devotion, or toil, or love, or martyrdom. Noble self-denying deeds may be for man's praise or in self-complacency ; chastity may be proud ; almsgiving vainglorious. Active service may be its own reward ; death itself may be undergone amid obstinacy. Love hath no end but God, seeketh nothing but Himself for Himself, "seeketh not her own ;" for in God she hath all things and overfloweth ; hath, only to overflow to others ; receives but to diffuse and to give back. All virtues are but forms of love, for she is the soul of all. Temperance, says a father, "is love, keeping itself pure and undefiled for God. Fortitude is love, readily enduring all things for the sake of God. Justice is love, which serveth God alone, and so hath command over all things subject to man. Prudence is love, distinguishing what helpeth it towards God from what hindereth it." Or "love, kindled with entire holiness towards God, when it coveteth nothing out of God, is called temperance ; when it willingly parteth with all, is called fortitude." Love contains all virtues, it animates all, but itself beyond all ; looks out of all to Him, does all to Him, and in all sees Him, and rests not until she finds her rest in the all-loving Bosom of God.

O sweet abode of peace and love,
Where pilgrims freed from toil are blest,
Had I the pinions of the dove,
I'd fly to Thee and be at rest.

But hush, my soul, nor dare repine !
The time my God appoints is best ;
While here, to do His will be mine,
And His to fix my time of rest.

Second Sunday after Trinity.

A certain man made a great supper. S. LUKE xiv. 16.

THE Gospel for to-day seems to contain a secret allusion to that great Feast of Love, the Body and Blood of Christ, which is not only in itself our life, but also "Christ in us;" is not merely the pilgrim's food for the daily want, but "the hope of glory." This Bread of God, it is indeed life-giving Bread. This is the one eternal sacrifice—exhaustless, ever living—whereon it is needful for us to feed if we would live. Feeding upon that Flesh which God hath glorified, we are gathered into the transcendent glory of that Life wherein God hath exalted it. Oh that, partaking of this Bread which came down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world, we might meditate more on Christ's death and passion! that it might fill our hearts far more than it does! Nothing will purge us like this Divine fire from sensual lusts; nothing will withdraw us from the desire of the eyes so much as setting before us this Divine image of Love itself; nothing will so humble us from the pride of life as dwelling more and more on that shame and sorrow of the Cross, the shame and sorrow which we have laid upon Him, and which He willingly took for our sakes. It will tend beyond anything else to kill within us the love of this world, ambition, and covetousness.

O broken Flesh, O Blood outpoured,
By man and Angels both adored,
O Holy, Holy, Holy Lord,

Grant us to know with faithful eye,
As Saints and Angels know on high,
Thy Presence in Thy Mystery;

Then, by the Sufferings keen and sore
Which once that broken Body bore,
Draw near, and silently adore.

Second Monday after Trinity.

And bade many. S. LUKE xiv. 16.

THE delights of God are with man; He loves to speak to his heart, and therefore the secret of a spiritual life consists in knowing how to retire into one's own heart and dwell therein with God. A child, while weak and tender, is nursed, petted, indulged, and soothed. When he grows older, placed under rule, he is obliged to do things which are unpleasant, and of which he does not as yet see the use; when necessary, he is treated severely. Why? To draw out his powers, and prepare a useful and happy life for him in the future. God acts in the same manner towards His children. He intends them for citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem. When they begin to give themselves up to Him, He makes the greatest allowances for their weakness, in order to win their hearts; He makes all things easy to them, He puts temptation away. When they grow stronger, and are capable of receiving solid lessons in the interior life, He prescribes difficult duties, and requires their fulfilment with extreme severity. The language of grace is no longer tender and persuasive, it is strong, imperious, and threatening. He fits his exercises, trials, and temptations to their strength; and the more He has endowed them with powers natural and supernatural, the more He demands of them, till they are moulded to all virtues. When they have reached that point of perfection to which He desires to bring them, He crowns their struggles and obedience, makes them everlasting partakers of His glory.

Blessèd day which hastens fast,
End of conflict and of sin!
Death itself shall die at last,
Heaven's eternal joys begin!
Then eternity shall prove
God is Light, and God is Love!

Second Tuesday after Trinity.

Come ; for all things are now ready. S. LUKE xiv. 17.

WHERE, above all, shouldest thou seek for His love but in the Feast of His Love? Without it ye cannot have any true love. In it Jesus willeth to come to thee, to dwell in thee. "How should ye have life, if ye have not Him Who is Life? How should ye have Him, if ye refuse to come to Him? Come to Him, longing for His love ; pray Him to enter into your soul and pour His love into you, and He will come and will dwell in you everlastingly. O abyss of love, torrent of pleasure, life of them that believe, paradise of delights, comfort of our pilgrimage, reward of the blessed, root of all good, strength in all strife, rest in all weariness!" Why seek for pleasures which perish in the grasp, and when tasted become bitterness? why love vanities, when ye have before you love which cannot weary, cannot change, cannot fail? for love is the essence, the bliss, the being, the glory of God. This may be yours for evermore. God, in Whom are all things, Who is all goodness, willeth that ye love Him eternally, be eternally filled with His love, and enter into His joy, the joy of the everlasting Father in His co-equal Son through the Spirit, of both proceeding, the bond of both, and that ye should rest in the Bosom of His love, and His love rest upon you and fill you for ever, that ye may have for ever His love which passeth all understanding, and be one with God, being filled with the love of God.

In full fruition of exhaustless life,
In Christ's rich pastures of salvation.

Second Wednesday after Trinity.

And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it : I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them : I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come. S. LUKE xiv. 18-20.

THESE three excuses seem intended to express all the various influences which prevail in the world, and which prevent men from being conformed to that love of God and of our neighbour, from realizing the kingdom of heaven which is within us. The occasions of hindrances are matters innocent and perhaps necessary, the invitation does not require that they should be relinquished. The bountiful Friend does not ask of one to forfeit the piece of ground nor the yoke of oxen, nor the third to forsake his wife. They might have kept all these and attended to them, without refusing to come. The rejection consists in this, that their hearts were filled with these pursuits. Christ knew us better than we know ourselves. A little business, a little pleasure, a little worldly society, household cares or engagements, the prospect of gain, or some national or political excitement, cross the path and divert the thoughts. All these excuses mentioned in the parable consist of considerations which are selfish ; they are of self-interest, self-indulgence. It is self taking the first place. Let God be first, and all things will be sanctified. For occupations which are pursued for the good of our neighbour, or in the service of God, or for the humiliation of self, always dispose the heart to that love in which consists eternal life.

If I in golden idol build my trust,
Or reedy palaces of earth-born fame,
By enchanted streams, therein to glass my name,
Do Thou, great God, do Thou the gilded bust
To shivers rend !

Second Thursday after Trinity.

*I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it.
... I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray
thee have me excused.* S. LUKE xiv. 18, 19.

WE must not be taken up with things out of God, if we would have His secret presence. Not man's manifold labours, but his manifold cares, hinder the presence of God. Labour, ordained by God and wrought for and in God, invites God's fuller presence; for God is in the heart of him who, in the very sweat of his brow, toils as God appoints him. Cares, whereof man himself is the end, so far shut out that fuller presence, because they enter into and take up the heart. God, Who chose the fishermen and the tax-gatherer and the tentmaker to confound the wisdom and the greatness of the world, yea, He Who framed the worlds, but Himself became the Carpenter's Son and the Carpenter, will fill and inundate with the sweetness of His love and enlighten with His wisdom and enrich with His consolations the poorest and most unlettered who plies his daily task for Him. The very things of God Himself, if sought for themselves, not for Him, may shut out God. How can God speak to the soul when the eye is ever roving with curiosity, the ear ever listening for some new thing? "If," says a holy man, "thou preparest the inward ear for this voice of thy God, sweeter than honey and the honeycomb, flee outward cares. So shall thy inner sense be clear and free, and thou mayest say with Samuel, 'Speak, Lord; for Thy servant heareth.'"

Speak to me, O my Saviour, low and sweet,

Lest I should fear and fall, and miss Thee so,
Who art not missed where faithful hearts intreat;
Speak to me, as to Mary at Thy Feet.

Second Friday after Trinity.

I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come. S. LUKE
xiv. 20.

HUSBANDS and wives, make not this excuse, but look to that in one another which shall live on and shine on in the heavenly courts. Live, day by day, for that day ; love, day by day, with that day before you ; love, as ye shall wish ye had loved in that day ; love that which shall abide in that searching day, when wood, hay, stubble, shall be burnt up. Love with a tender, forbearing love, as Christ is tender and compassionate with us, bearing with our decay, and beholding us as what, by His grace, we shall one day be ; cherishing one another, encouraging one another, helping one the other along the narrow road which leadeth unto Him ; denying, each self for the other, as Christ loved our souls more than Himself. This love shall grow with years, as the love of Christ and the grace of Christ, which is the beauty of the soul, grows and is enlarged in each. This love shall be refined and purified by sickness and the wasting of the body, as the soul shall through God's chastening, purifying Hand, lay aside its dross, and glow the more with the beauty of the grace of Christ. This love shall not die, even after the body's death. Souls which are united in Christ, shall not be separated from Christ ; they shall live on still, one in the one love of Christ. In heaven there shall be "neither marrying nor giving in marriage," but there shall be love, pure, holy, happy.

Love in heaven will shine more bright ;
Therefore, give us Love.

Second Saturday after Trinity.

And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in. S. LUKE xiv. 23.

THAT we are in numberless cases unfitted to guide ourselves without some external aid, especially in cases of deep concern, such as keenly affect our own interest, our passions, our weakness; that religious questions, above all others, touch with peculiar absorbing force on every part of our lives, and every acting of our minds, accompanied by difficulties and trials from which none can hope to escape; that while any Christian of mature and disciplined habits of mind may be well able and rightfully entitled to give counsel and advice, yet the priests of God are specially commissioned and empowered both to "keep" and impart knowledge in spiritual things, and are set in the midst as fathers and guides of souls, not merely in public ministrations, but also in private offices, in all that concerns the interior life, in a way that can belong to none but divinely authorized persons. The desire which must ever be at the heart of a priest with regard to those under his care is to elevate the character, to develop and aid God's own work in the soul, making it more dependent on His guidance, more trustful of His mercy, more conscious of His indwelling presence.

Christ, by Thy Father's high decree,
Sealed the great Priest to be,
Who chooseth Thine own ministry,
And formest them to Thee.

Led by Thy guiding Hand.

He shows the way, and He precedes,
It is His life that leads;
And while His words the faith reveal,
His actions set the seal.

Third Sunday after Trinity.

Be subject one to another. I S. PETER v. 5.

THERE are two sorts of obedience, necessary and voluntary. By that which is necessary you are bound to obey your ecclesiastical superiors, as the bishop, the parish priest, and such as are commissioned by them; you must also obey your civil superiors, such as your sovereign and the magistrates who are put in authority under him; lastly, you must obey your domestic superiors, your father, mother, master, mistress. This obedience is called necessary, because no man can exempt himself from the duty of obeying these superiors, God having placed them in authority to command and govern us, each in the department which is assigned to him. Obey meekly without reply, readily without delay, cheerfully without repining; above all obey lovingly, for the love of Him Who for love of us made Himself obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross, and Who, as S. Bernard says, rather chose to part with His life than His obedience. That you may learn effectually to obey your superiors, comply readily with the will of your equals, yielding to their opinions in what is not wrong, without being contentious or obstinate. Accommodate yourself cheerfully to the desires of your inferiors, as far as it is reasonable to do so, never exercising an imperious authority over them so long as they are good. Voluntary obedience is that to which we oblige ourselves by our own choice, and which is not imposed upon us by another. If without a vow we dedicate ourselves to the obedience of any one, this obedience is called voluntary, on account of its being grounded on our own freewill. Blessed are the obedient, for God will never suffer them to go astray; for

'Tis not for us and our proud hearts,
O mighty Lord, to choose our parts,
But act well what Thou givest.

Third Monday after Trinity.

Be clothed with humility. 1 S. PETER v. 5.

LET your soul lie before God ready to be despoiled of one thing after another, as He may see fit. Hard, indeed, it will be to nature, but the soul which is able to do this, and to possess God wholly and entirely, is indeed blessed above all others. Christ is the centre, not only of our religion, but of our spiritual life. He humbled Himself to death, even the death of the Cross! therefore let us be clothed with humility. Be covered all over with lowliness of heart, leaving no part unguarded, with bonds and knots, as the word implies, wrapping closely around you this mantle of protection; and why? for "God resisteth," setteth Himself in array against, "the proud, and giveth grace to the humble." S. Peter himself knew by sad experience the truth of what he said; for before his fall he said, "Though all men shall be offended because of Thee, yet will I never be offended." But after the resurrection, when his Lord said unto him, "Lovest thou Me more than these?" he was grieved at the question being thrice put to him, and said, "Lord, Thou knowest all things: Thou knowest that I love Thee." Thus did he learn to look to God only, not venturing to compare himself again with others, or to prefer himself before them.

My soul, wouldst thou behold thy God,
Wouldst thou for ever be
There, where thy sight can bear His light
Through all eternity?
Wouldst thou arise to those pure skies
Where no sin-clouds obscure,
And there abide with Him Who died?
Thou must, my heart, be pure!

Third Tuesday after Trinity.

Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.
HEBREWS iv. 16.

WHEN tempted, do you never feel inclined to give the whole matter up and in despair let the wave of temptation flow down how and when it will? Are you not inclined to say, "I have striven against temptation until I am tired, I will strive no longer; I do not get the help I expected. I will give way after all"? Such did not Jesus; His resource was always prayer and His conduct cheerful obedience. As He *with* you has borne your trials, so *as* He did, bear yours; and dwelling on His love, looking to Him as your nearest Friend, remembering He intercedes for you in heaven; that not a tear you shed drops unpitied by Him; holding intercourse with Him in every trial, looking to Him in every temptation—by night your Refuge and by day your Friend.

When gathering clouds around I view,
And days are dark and friends are few,
On Him I lean, Who not in vain
Experienced every human pain;
He sees my wants, allays my fears,
And counts and treasures up my tears.

If aught should tempt my soul to stray
From heavenly wisdom's narrow way,
To flee the good I would pursue,
Or do the ill I would not do,
Still He, Who felt temptation's power,
Shall guard me in the dang'rous hour.

Third Wednesday after Trinity.

Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time. I S. PETER v. 6.

A BISHOP who had a special reverence for the picture of the penitent Magdalene kneeling before the Cross, saying that it was as a whole library to him, when looking at a painting of this subject in the house of a friend, he said: "What a thrice-blessed exchange this penitent soul made! She poured out her tears upon Jesus' Feet, and from those very Feet His Blood was shed forth upon her, to cleanse her from all her sins! How watchfully we should cultivate the little virtues which grow beneath the foot of the Cross, for they are watered with the very Blood of the Son of God!" He was asked what virtues? "Humility, patience, gentleness, kindness, forbearance, indulgence, calmness, good temper, heartiness, pity, ready forgiveness, simplicity, frankness," he replied. "Such virtues are like violets growing in a shady nook, fed by the dew of heaven, and though unseen, shedding forth a sweet and precious odour." "What else can we find at the top of the Cross itself?" was asked. "There you will find bright, shining graces, if they are performed in the spirit of love—prudence, justice, zeal, almsgiving, strength, charity, bodily mortification, obedience, contemplation, contempt of riches and honours and the like. Men are keener after such virtues, for they win esteem and praise, but we ought only to value them in so far as we can please God by their means, and find fresh ways of proving our love for Him therein."

Many a blow and biting sculpture
Polished well those stones elect,
In their places now compacted
By the Heavenly Architect;
Who therewith hath willed for ever
That His palace should be decked.

Third Thursday after Trinity.

Casting all your care upon Him ; for He careth for you. 1 S.
PETER V. 7.

GOD careth for you like a parent for a child, but with a peculiar and intimate regard beyond the thought of man ; for the hairs of your head by Him are numbered. Humble yourselves, therefore. This humility is an exercise, a practice, a habit to be obtained by lowly actions and thoughts ; whereas, whatever tends to exalt us in our own eyes does so far lessen within us the grace of God. Casting on Him every care. Unite your prayer with that of Jesus in Gethsemane, and all its trials will be light. It may be in silence, in contrition, in desolation, that your Lord tries you, but submit yourself a willing victim to whatever it be. Bethink you of the pains of hell, and all healing pain will seem light, even though protracted and sharp. It may be that God chastens you by silence or by permitting contrition to assume a form of bitter shame for past sin. Whatever shape His loving correction may take, accept it in a spirit of ready sacrifice. Such a spirit will draw you very close to God in prayer ; the bitter waters will become sweet to your soul, and your darkness will become light. Lay your heads and all your troubles on the bosom of His infinite tenderness and compassion ; there is your only safety. If you forget this and trust to yourselves, you will immediately fall, and that assuredly. Thence follows, as in close connection with this subject, that of unceasing watchfulness.

My Father and my God,
O set this spirit free !
I'd gladly kiss the rod
That drove my trembling soul to Thee,
And made it Thine eternally !

Third Friday after Trinity.

Be sober, be vigilant ; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour : whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world. I S. PETER v. 8, 9.

THE Christian's arms against Satan are watchfulness and prayer. It is impossible that the soul of man should escape temptation. So God said not "watch and pray, that ye be not tempted," but that ye enter not into temptation, *i.e.* that ye fall not under temptation. Watchfulness is necessary for all men, how holy soever they be. Any one who is not on his guard, is, for that very reason, in danger from the devil. Watchfulness consists, in the first place, in shunning occasions of temptation ; in the second, it consists in a humble distrust of ourselves. He cannot utterly fall who is lowly in his own eyes and leans only on the Lord. Confound not mistrust of self with faint-heartedness. The faint-hearted looks no further than himself, and, comparing his danger with his weakness, turns to fly when he ought to fight. The humble Christian looks at once on his own weakness and the might of God. When bidden to the strife he fears nothing, on the contrary, the more he feels his own inability to resist, the more he trusts that Almighty strength will sustain him. Watchfulness consists in unshaken faithfulness. Hold fast to the practice of contemplative prayer and interior mortification : follow out all the guidance God may have given you. Observe every particular of the rule which you have laid down for yourself or which has been prescribed for you. Allow yourself in no wilful breach of duty, and the devil will be powerless ; then

Fear not, O little flock and blest,
The lion that your life oppressed !

The Lamb's fair footsteps follow still.

Third Saturday after Trinity.

But the God of all grace, Who hath called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you. I S. PETER v. 10.

WITH this beautiful sentence, containing the fulness of blessing and the highest exhortation to all patience, S. Peter ends this appeal. "The call to eternal glory," and the "suffering for a while," seem here set against each other, as in S. Paul's expression, "our light affliction, which is but for a moment," is weighed in the balance with "an eternal weight of glory." The four words, "perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you," are very forcible in describing the good effect of tribulations and afflictions. The effect of such trials in persons duly exercised thereby, is to render more secure the foundations on which their faith is built; to induce them as it were to go deeper until they come to the rock, which rock is Christ. The spiritual house to be blessed with Christ's presence, must, as the material temple of old, "be built in troublous times," otherwise there will be but the fair structure whose foundation is on the sands. But God be praised that He is ever wont to give us not only what the world calls blessings, and which appear so in their coming on, but such also as are known to be blessings in their going away, those sharp and severe trials which, in some shape or other, are calculated to find out our weak points. And if we be but faithful in making the most of them, they will, by God's blessing, and in His own good time, "perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle us;" then

Earth may reel and men may fear,
Still to thee thy God is near;
Keep the choice thy soul has made,
Fear not then, nor be afraid!

Fourth Sunday after Trinity.

Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful. Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children. S. LUKE vi. 36 ;
EPHESIANS v. 1.

THERE are special self-denials and toils and ministries of love, unsparing acts of self-devotion, it may be lifelong, which are to many the rejoicing exercise of powers kindled by God for His glory, but not the portion of all. Yet a like spirit may animate quiet ordinary ways of an unnoticed unobtrusive faithfulness in everyday duties in any sphere of life. To labour to do good where we have done evil—to make peace where we have marred it—to cause joy where we have caused sorrow—to heal wounds and repair wrong—to impart life where we may have spread the infection of death—to promote the glory of God where He has been dishonoured—to extend the blessing of the love of Christ, and win hearts to Him, where His claims have been disregarded, His yearning love disappointed—to seek, through trial and effort, and the abandonment of one's own wishes, interest, and ease, thus to spend and be spent,—these are elements of the meet and acceptable sacrifice, open alike to every redeemed man, which, united with the merits of the Passion of the Son of God, will surely be remembered in that day

When these low scenes of earth and night
No longer intercept my sight,
Or tempt my feet from Thee.

When, rising in Divine array,
No more a prisoner of clay,
My soul her Judge, without dismay,
Shall meet and reign with Thee.

Fourth Monday after Trinity.

Judge not, and ye shall not be judged : condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned. S. LUKE vi. 37.

IF we are impressed with the speedy coming on of the day of judgment, not knowing what then will be our portion and the shortness of the intervening time, how exceedingly gracious is this declaration, whereby God is pleased to put into our own hands as it were the sentence which is to be passed upon us. And indeed there is a peculiar fitness it should be so, for the more earnestly we seek, by repentance and prayer, to avert God's judgment from ourselves on account of our past sins, the more we tremble and pray lest we be condemned ; the more we seek of God forgiveness for the past, by so much the more do we become disposed not to condemn, not to judge, but to forgive others. And this of which I speak is but the Spirit of God within us, answering our sighs and prayers and our desires to avert judgment with this very same declaration which our Lord Himself makes, "Judge not, and ye shall not be judged." It is the good Spirit putting it into our better thoughts on such occasions, and whispering to us with His own still small voice, after the tempest of some worldly calamity. It is His gracious voice at length being heard, saying, "Art thou afraid?" Well, "judge not, and thou shalt not be judged : condemn not, and thou shalt not be condemned : forgive, and thou shalt be forgiven." He inclines the heart. How all important is it that we act up to these His suggestions.

Mournest thou, poor soul, and wouldest thou yet

Call back the things which shall not, cannot be ?
Heaven must be won, not dreamed : thy task is set.

Fourth Tuesday after Trinity.

Forgive, and ye shall be forgiven. S. LUKE vi. 37.

JESUS said, "Father, forgive them ; for they know not what they do." We all have a place in that prayer, in that stretching forth of His Hands to God, for all are guilty of that death. Often has the like been repeated for us by the mediations of our merciful High Priest. But the more immediate occasion of that prayer may bring back to us all, with great power, this remembrance of Him in the offering up of Himself. For never was such hate and cruelty shown as then, never such love expressed. Divine love not only forgives, and prays for forgiveness on bitterest enemies, but sees and takes hold of causes, however slight, for pity and pardon, "for they know not what they do." How different is it with men or the illwill which they feel for any affront or injury ; how apt are we to put the worst interpretation on what is done. What so conducive to a better mind as this remembrance. "Here for them do I shed My Blood, and do Thou, O Father, forgive them." He Who had no sin, and could see the hearts of men, could behold a place for His forgiveness ; this was His consolation in that bitter cup, that they had not yet passed the bounds of His mercy. In the Sacrament of His Body and Blood how earnestly should we pray for one drop of this mercy for each other, one ray of charity, and,

Our souls provoked by lesser ills,
Should yield the pardon we require so much,
Forbearing others every hour we live,
Seeking forgiveness, called on to forgive—
Forgiveness,—purchased and most precious gem
Amid the jewels of God's diadem.

Fourth Wednesday after Trinity.

Give, and it shall be given unto you. S. LUKE vi. 38.

SELF-DENIAL is a subject never out of place in Christian teaching. If the Saints of old gave their time, ought not we to deny ourselves, so that we too may say to Christ's poor, "Such as I have give I thee"? "Such as I have give I thee"—these are the words of S. Peter, but can we hear them without recognising the voice of S. Peter's Master and our Master saying, "Such as I had gave I thee; such as I have give I thee"? "I gave thee My Godhead, for so far as it was possible I laid it aside; emptied Myself of its glory so as to become like unto thee. I Who was rich in the ownership of all things, for thy sake became poor, that thou through My poverty mightest become rich." "I gave thee My life, for I laid it down for the sheep of My flock." "I gave thee My Blood, for I shed it for the remission of thy sins." "I give thee My Spirit, that He may guide thee into all truth, and enable thee to bear the fruits of all goodness." "I give thee My Body and My Blood, so that I may dwell in thee and thou in Me." "As I have given to thee all this, so I ask thee to give to Me something for the relief of My poor, for the enlargement of My kingdom. Not that thy gifts are profitable to Me, but they are profitable to thee."

Be brave, my brother !
He Whom thou servest slights
Not even His weakest one ;
No deed, though poor, shall be forgot,
However feebly done.

Fourth Thursday after Trinity.

Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me ; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light. S. MATTHEW xi. 29, 30.

“My yoke,” says Christ, “is easy, My burden is light.” But grace made it so ; in itself it is severe, and any form of doctrine which teaches otherwise forgets that Christ calls us to His yoke, and that that yoke is a cross. If you call to mind some of the traits of that special religious character to which we are called, you will readily understand how both it and the discipline by which it is formed in us are not naturally pleasant to us. That character is described in the text as meekness and lowliness ; for we are told to “learn of Him Who was meek and lowly in heart.” The same character is presented to us at greater length in our Saviour’s Sermon on the Mount, in which seven notes of a Christian are given to us, in themselves of a painful and humbling character, but joyful, because they are blessed by Him. He mentions poor in spirit, lowly in heart, the mourners, the meek, those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers, and lastly those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake. Such as these are the true followers of Christ and take His yoke. Such is the character of which the text speaks.

Be brave, my brother !
The recompense is great,
The kingdom bright and fair :
Beyond the glory of all earthly state,
Shall be the glory there.

Grudge not the heavy cost,
Faint not at labour here,
'Tis but a lifetime at the most,
The day of rest is near.

Fourth Friday after Trinity.

For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps. 1 S. PETER ii. 21.

CHRIST shows us from His own example what Christian self-denial is. It is taking on us a cross after His pattern, not a mere refraining from sin, for He had no sin, but a giving up what we might lawfully use. This was the peculiar character in which Christ came on earth. "God so loved the world, that He gave His Son." Here is self-denial. And the Son of God so loved us, "that, though He was rich, yet for our sakes He became poor." Here is our Saviour's self-denial. Let us strive and pray that the love of holiness may be created within our hearts, and then acts will follow. Christ bids you take up your cross; therefore accept *the daily* opportunities which occur of yielding to others, and of doing unpleasant service which you might avoid. He bids you shut your ears to praise when it grows loud. Set your face like a flint when the world ridicules. Learn to master your heart when it would burst forth into vehemence or prolong a barren sorrow. Curb your tongue, and turn away your eye, lest you fall into temptation. Avoid the dangerous air which relaxes you, and brace yourself upon the heights. So shall self-denial become natural to you, and a change come over you, gently and imperceptibly, and, like Jacob, you will lie down in the waste, and will soon see Angels.

Or if no Angel pass that way,
He Who in secret sees, perchance
May bid His own heart-warming ray
Toward thee stream with kindlier glance,
As when upon His drooping Head
His Father's light was poured from heaven,
What time, unsheltered and unfed,
Far in the wild His steps were driven.

Fourth Saturday after Trinity.

For ye were as sheep going astray ; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls. I S. PETER ii. 25.

IF Almighty God moves any of us, so that we have high thoughts ; if from reading Scripture or holy books we find that we can embrace views above the world ; if it is given us to recognise the glory of Christ's kingdom, to discern its spiritual nature, to admire the life of Saints, and to desire to imitate it ; if we feel and understand that it is good to bear the yoke, good to be in trouble, good to be poor ; if in imagination we put ourselves at the feet of those mortified men of old time who, after S. Paul's pattern, died daily, and knew no one after the flesh,—if we feel all this, and are conscious we feel it, let us not boast. Why ? because of a surety such feelings are a pledge to us that God will in some way or other give them exercise. He gives them to us that He may use them. He gives us the opportunity of using them. Dare not to indulge in high thoughts ; be cautious of them and refrain ; they are the shadows of coming trials ; they are not given for nothing ; they are given for an end ; that end is coming. Never does God give faith but He tries it ; never does He implant the wish to sit on His right hand and on His left, but He fulfils it by making us wash our brethren's feet. May God temper things to us, that nothing may be beyond our strength.

Then draw we nearer day by day
Each to his brethren, all to God ;
Let the world take us as she may,
We must not change our road.

Hold love's banner fast,
And by submission win at last.

Fifth Sunday after Trinity.

Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.
GALATIANS v. 6.

IF one stone did not uphold another, how could the building stand? We are the building of God, raised up of living stones, and unless they uphold one another, it will become a mere heap. The highest achievement of charity is to love our enemies; but to bear cheerfully with our neighbour's failings is scarcely an inferior grace. It is easy to love those who are agreeable and obliging—what fly is not attracted by sugar and honey?—but to love one who is cross, perverse, tiresome, is unpleasant; but this is the real touchstone of brotherly love. The best way of practising it is to put oneself in the place of him who tries us, and to see how we should wish him to treat us. “When,” says a Saint of old, “shall we learn sufficiently to bear with our neighbours? that most precious lesson of the Saints. Blessed is he who hath acquired it. We want to have our burdens borne for us, and we always count them worthy of respect, but we are generally ready to find out that our neighbour's burden is too cumbrous or unsupportable to us.” Three things are necessary if we would live according to the mind of Jesus Christ, viz. first, to follow His maxims; second, to do His work; and third, to be actuated in all we do by His Holy Spirit.

Let the great Master's steps be thine;
Fill up each hour with what will last;
Buy up the moments as they go:
The life above, when this is past,
Is the ripe fruit of life below.
Sow truth if thou the truth wouldst reap;

Sow love, and taste its fruitage pure;
Sow peace, and reap its harvest bright.

Fifth Monday after Trinity.

Love as brethren. I S. PETER iii. 8.

TRUE love is never wanting under any trial, this we must ever bear in mind if we would follow our Master. The aim of Christianity, as of its Founder, is to kindle us with His Spirit and to teach us to live solely thereby. The supernatural charity which the Holy Spirit pours into our hearts causes us to love God for His own sake with true love ; and to love our neighbour with a similar love for God's sake, because it is His will, and He is glorified by such a love, which returns to Him as its source. Those loving deeds which are done to our neighbour for God's sake are the most perfect of all, "because they have reference solely to Him ; and the good offices which we render to those we love because of our personal affection are less meritorious, because of the satisfaction we find in them, which is what often prompts them rather than the love of God." So far from loving our neighbour less because we love him in and for God, we love him far more, and our natural friendship becomes supernatural ; and that which is earthly becomes heavenly. We need to look upon our neighbour as in the Breast of Christ. He who does not do this runs the risk of not loving purely, faithfully. That Saviour in Whose Breast we behold him loved him so as to die for him. Let us love for God's sake those whom we already love for their own sake, such love endureth for ever.

Our God is love ; and all His Saints
His image bear below :
The heart with love to God inspired
With love to man will glow.
Teach us to love each other, Lord,
As we are loved by Thee.

Fifth Tuesday after Trinity.

Be pitiful, be courteous. I S. PETER iii. 8.

A HOLY man of old has said that an angry elephant might be calmed by a little lamb. Our dear Lord promised that the meek shall inherit the earth, inasmuch as by their gentleness and kindness they become masters of the hearts of men. Gentle people easily mould themselves to the will of others, and in consequence other men submit more easily to their will. S. Paul describes what this spiritual character is, its expressions and manifestations; but there is one gift which sums up all the features of it, the gift of love or charity. No words, however, can make us understand this character unless we have that within us which leads us to discern it when we see it, unless our own perceptions are arrested by some peculiar forms and manifestations which naturally impress us as spiritual. Without being able to express accurately all we mean by love, we recognise it when we meet it. There are those who stand out from among the crowd which reflect merely the atmosphere of feeling and standard of society around it, with an impress upon them which bespeaks a heavenly birth. They stand apart from the struggle in which common minds are absorbed. Without spiritual pride, they think little of themselves and much of others. They have a love for all whom God has made after His own image. They exhibit the actions of Divine grace.

Holy prayers and deeds of faith,
Such as to-day the Christian hath
For love of Jesus done,
Shall—though by him forgotten—be
Strength for another victory
Beneath to-morrow's sun.

Fifth Wednesday after Trinity.

Not rendering evil for evil: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing.
1 S. PETER iii. 9.

NOTHING tends so much to train us in calmness under this life's vexations as constant recollection of all the contempt and insult which beset our dear Lord. By the side of such trials we can scarce call our petty troubles adversities. A little humility would enable us to bear all insults with quiet endurance. There is a rich harvest to be reaped from insult and injury, which call forth many graces in us, *i.e.* Justice. Has some one offended you? Bethink you how often you have offended God. If justly accused, acknowledge the fault, asking forgiveness, and thank him who brings the fault home to us. Disagreeable medicine is very useful in its effects. If unjustly accused, bear witness of the truth calmly. If still accused, "give place unto wrath," exercise silence, meekness. Take no heed of a false accusation, and it will die away. Then follows Discretion, the essence of which is to be moderate. Courage and Resolution, as attained by self-mastery. Temperance, which restrains headlong impulses. Humility, the force of which lies in not merely realizing but accepting abjection. Faith, which "stopped the mouth of lions," teaches us to look to Jesus, Who beneath His load of insult openeth not His mouth. Hope bids us to look to a crown which never fades; and Charity is patient, tender, compassionate, gracious.

This is his work whose heart to God is true.

Fifth Thursday after Trinity.

For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile. 1 S. PETER iii. 10.

AFTER the example of Him "Who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth." Come to God and beg of Him grace to devote yourselves to Him. Beg of Him the will to follow Him. Oh how sweet, soothing, and satisfying is it to lead a holy life! It is difficult at first; but with God's grace all things are possible. How pleasant to have done with sin! how good and joyful to flee temptation! how meet and right to die unto sin, to live unto righteousness! Great acts may be out of reach to most of us. All can restrain the tongue. Let all you say be dictated by a spirit of humility. Let your speech be meek, sincere, and truthful. Guard yourself from equivocations, artifices; for although it may not be advisable to say all sorts of truths at all times, it is never allowable to speak contrary to truth. God is the God of truth. When you hear any one spoken ill of, make the accusation doubtful, if you can do it justly; if not, excuse the intention of the person accused; divert the discourse (they who do not fall owe all the thanks to God); recall the detractor to himself with meekness; declare some good action of the party offended.

Thou must be true thyself,
If thou the truth wouldst teach;
Thy soul must overflow, if thou
Another's soul wouldst reach!
It needs the overflow of heart
To give the lips full speech.

Speak truly, and each word of thine
Shall be a fruitful seed;
Live truly, and thy life shall be
A great and noble creed.

Fifth Friday after Trinity.

Eschew evil, and do good ; seek peace, and ensue it. I S. PETER
iii. 11.

LIFE is made up not of great sacrifices or duties, but of little things, in which smiles and kindness and small obligations, given habitually, are what win and preserve the heart. As the branch produces fruit according to the nature of the vine, so the Christian produces fruit according to the nature of Christ. What the fruits of that nature were in Christ, so they are intended to be in him that is so joined to Him as to be "in" Him. About these fruits there can be no dispute. Try yourself whether in any true sense you "follow Christ." Your Heavenly Father looks for Christians as like as possible to His own Son, Who went about doing good and giving peace. If you are in Christ, you look to Him; you pray earnestly in His Name. If you are in Christ, you mortify the flesh, with its affections and lusts; you strive earnestly, pray heartily to live a godly, righteous, and sober life. A godly life—a life, that is, as in the presence of God; a righteous life—that is, an upright, straightforward, honest, and truthful life; a sober life—that is, a temperate, well-ordered, and if God calls you to it, a mortified, self-denying life.

We live in deeds, not years ; in thoughts, not breaths ;
In feelings, not in figures on a dial ;
We should not count time by heart-throbs.
He most lives
Who thinks most, feels the noblest, acts the best.

Fifth Saturday after Trinity.

For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and His ears are open unto their prayers. I S. PETER iii. 12.

THERE are two modes of praying: the one is prayer at set times and places and in set forms; the other is continual or habitual prayer. Prayer is to spiritual life what the beating of the pulse is to the life of the body. In prayer the true Christian pierces through the veil of this world and sees the next. He holds intercourse with it. Such prayers God will answer. How beautifully the following teaches this truth. There is no greater Saint since the days of the Apostles, none whose works have had a greater influence for good, than S. Augustine. He was an unbeliever, living unbaptized till he had come to manhood, because he was entangled by a habit of sin; but his mother, Monica, who was devout and holy, never ceased her earnest prayers for him; and her prayers, like those of the Canaanitish woman, were abundantly heard and answered. She lived to see him become a remarkable, penitent, and holy man, to be herself instructed by his wonderful wisdom in the things of God; and she blessed God that he was given to her prayers as a brand plucked from the fire, and made to shine as a star in heaven for ever and ever, turning many to righteousness. With these examples let us now earnestly entreat those who pray for themselves to pray for others also.

Prayer makes the darkened cloud withdraw,
Prayer climbs the ladder Jacob saw,
Gives exercise to faith and love,
Brings every blessing from above.

Sixth Sunday after Trinity.

Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death ? ROMANS vi. 3.

So many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, have the full efficacy of Christ's death sealed up unto us, and by virtue thereof die unto our sins. We do not really die, we were not really buried, we were not really crucified and raised again ; but our imitation was but in a figure, while our salvation is in reality. Christ was actually crucified, and actually buried, and truly rose again ; and all these things have been vouchsafed to us, that we, by imitation communicating in His sufferings, might gain salvation in reality. O surpassing loving-kindness ! Christ received the nails in His undefiled Hands and Feet, and endured anguish ; while to me, without suffering or toil, by the fellowship of His pain, He vouchsafes salvation. Let none suppose that Baptism is merely the grace of remission of sins, or that of adoption ; we know full well that as it purges our sins, and conveys to us the gift of the Holy Ghost, so also it is the counterpart of Christ's sufferings. For this cause S. Paul uses the words of our text, speaking to them who had settled with themselves that Baptism ministers to us the remission of sins and adoption ; but not that, further, it has communion also in representation with Christ's true sufferings. In order that we may learn that whatsoever things Christ endured He suffered them for us and for our salvation, and that in reality, not in appearance, we also are made partakers of His sufferings.

God did win
Freedom for His people
From the guilt of sin.

Sixth Monday after Trinity.

Walk in newness of life. ROMANS vi. 4.

INASMUCH as each one of us is a living temple of God, His stamp should be on your countenance, in your eyes, in your words, in every part of your outward bearing. The outward bearing of a Christian should leave no doubt on those around that God dwells within him; his calm, recollected manner should betoken that he remembers Whose temple he is. Who that keeps this ever before him, that reflects how God is in him and around him, but will strive earnestly that no word or action or look be unworthy that presence. Remembering, then, that we are the sanctuary and altar of God, anointed with the precious Blood, one with the Body of our Lord, does it not behove us to maintain a deep reverence for the body He has given us, to cultivate silence and recollection, and a spirit of perpetual adoration? Yet how continually we profane it both outwardly and inwardly, by dissipated thoughts, impurity, wandering glances, indulged appetites, curious ears, ease-loving members. Is this consistent with the belief that we are living temples of the Holy Ghost, an altar whereon Jesus lies? Too often the inner heart is like that Jewish temple which our Lord said was turned into a den of thieves. Be it yours to drive out all that offends, and to attain that spirit of purity and adoration which alone is worthy of God's holy presence, and to show forth in all you do and say that you are filled with His Majesty, consecrated to Him, partaking of His Divine nature, and so walking in newness of life.

Ye who your Lord's commission bear,
His way of mercy to prepare,
Angels He calls ye : be your strife
To lead on earth an Angel's life.

Sixth Tuesday after Trinity.

Walk in newness of life. ROMANS vi. 4.

FIRST go into thyself; ask light of God to see thyself; bear to know thyself and to know what thy sins are. Resolve firmly by thy Saviour's help to part with them rather than with Him. Then which of these is your besetting sin? If thou canst not find this for thyself, another perhaps may tell thee. Anyhow, take steadily some one sin, to root it out by God's grace, every fibre of it. Purpose strongly, by the grace and strength of God, wholly to sacrifice this sin or sinful inclination to the love of God, to spare it not until thou leave of it none remaining. Then as to this very sin, look carefully day by day what gives rise to it. Observe with especial care whether the temptation comes to thee from within or without. But observe also all the ways in which this sin overtakes, surprises, masters thee, that thou mayest be on thy guard against the assaults and against thyself. Observe too as well as thou canst the very ways in which thou yieldest to the sin—thine anger, impatience, or whatever else it be. Observe the very acts or words thou most often usest in giving vent to it. If thou art on thy guard, thou wilt often be able to stop the usual vent of thy sin; if thou stop this, thou wilt have gained time by God's grace to stop the sin too. As you observe these, fix them in your memory, write down something which may recall them. Fix, by God's help, not only to root out this sin, but to set thyself to gain by that same help the opposite grace.

Lord, help me.

Sixth Wednesday after Trinity.

Walk in newness of life. ROMANS vi. 4.

FRAME to thyself, or ask some one to help thee to form for thee, some simple rules which may help to guard thee or check thee from giving way to thy sin, or which may aid thee in gaining the grace thou desirest. These things thou mightest do, once for all, or for a long time, while thou art engaged in battling with and destroying *this* sin (thy besetting sin). It will not hinder thy work to think how thou mayest please God. Thus far is like making the instruments of thy daily work. When thou once hast them, they may require sharpening from time to time, but thy daily work is to use them. Thy daily exercise may be very short. God looks not at the length of words, but at the earnestness of thy heart. If thou hast much, give plenteously. When thou wakest, offer up thy whole self to God, soul and body, thoughts, purposes, and desires, to be for that day what He wills. Think of the occasions of the sin likely to befall thee, and go to Him Who died to redeem thee, tell Him in simple words thy trials. Be not ashamed of telling Him thy trifling troubles. We listen gladly to our children as they tell us their little troubles. To God all of ours is in itself alike little. All which concerns our soul is not little to Him Who sent His Son into the world to redeem us; it is not little to Him Who became man and died for us. The measure of the soul's value is

His love Who is Infinite.
Remember Calvary—its dying groan,
Its dying prayers and sacrifice for man,
Its sufferings His—its sins, its cause, your own,
Then turn to sloth and slumber if you can;
Sleep, and forget the hope, the heaven that lies
Beyond earth's conflicts. Sons of God, arise!

Sixth Thursday after Trinity.

Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body. ROMANS vi. 12.

TELL Jesus, then, your trials, and ask for grace in some such simple words as these :—

O good Jesus, my Saviour and my God ; Thou Who didst make me, knowest how weak I am. Thou knowest, good Lord, that I am tempted to [*then name the temptations to sin, and the ways in which you sin, as well as you know them*]. But, good Lord, for love of Thee, I would this day keep wholly from all [*naming the sin*] ; and be very [*naming the opposite grace*]. I will not, by Thy grace, do one [...] act, or speak one [...] word, or give one [...] look, or harbour one [...] thought in my soul. If Thou allowest any of these temptations to come upon me this day, I desire to think, speak, and do only what Thou wilt. Lord, without Thee I can do nothing ; with Thee I can do all. Accept, good Lord, this, or if I fall, bring me back quickly to Thee, and grant me to love Thee better, for Thy tender mercy's sake.

It will help thee much in thy warfare if thou first set before thy soul thy Lord as He showed forth that grace which thou wouldest copy. If the grace be humility, think of Him washing the disciples' feet ; if meekness, think of His receiving the traitor's kiss, and how thou hast betrayed Him by thy sins ; if it be patience under injuries, behold Him standing meekly while they buffeted, reviled, mocked, spat on Him ; if it be love of thy brother who offends thee, think of Him stretching out His Hands upon the Cross and embracing the whole world, and thee too with thy brother, in His love. There is no thought which has such power over the soul and over sin as the thought of Jesus. Behold Him in thy soul as thou hast seen Him on the Cross. Gaze on His meek Countenance, His Eye full of love resting on thee, the suffering of His Brow pierced for thee, and so ask Him for His love's sake that thou mayest love Him, and be less unlike Him. And then be very watchful ; watch with thy Lord for a short time, summon thy whole strength to keep thyself wholly from every form of thy besetting sin.

Sixth Friday after Trinity.

Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. ROMANS vi. 12.

LISTEN not to Satan, telling thee this is hard. It *is* hard when thou beginnest. It *is* hard to resist sin : it *is* hard not to follow thine own will ; but God will make hard ways easy. To have learned in one day with sorrow of heart for love of Jesus to look into thyself and bewail, not thy sinfulness only, but the sins of that day to Him, is the first and hardest step to eternal life. Pray to persevere, all the rest will be easier. Thinkest thou that it will be toilsome to thee so day by day to remove every speck of sin? What is it, then, which it is so wearisome to look to, to cleanse? Is it something which concerns thee not, something for a time only, something for another? Truly it is for another, for it is for the All-Holy Trinity; it is that thine own soul, whom thou shouldest love, may be enlarged to contain God and the love of God ; that too thy senses may desire nothing but what they have in that blessed-making Light of God, and have what overwhelms all their desire, to be blessed in His bliss, wise in His wisdom, good in His goodness, full of God yet stretching forth to God ; all thine which is God's save His Infinity, and that will be for thee too, for thou canst never reach the bounds of His perfections and His goodness. Shall this be for a time? No! for ye shall be, if ye attain, eternal in His eternity. Prepare yourself for such fulness of bliss, and

All graces I would crave to have
Calmly absorbed in one—
A perfect sorrow for my sins,
And duties left undone.

Sixth Saturday after Trinity.

Yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.
ROMANS VI. 13.

EVERY one who reflects at all upon the Christian life must be conscious that there exists an immense variety of character and temperament, disposing different men to the exercise of different virtues and graces, and making any one special virtue much easier and more attainable to certain minds than to others. God gives to each of us such a temperament as He sees to be capable of best promoting our true good, and He means each man to use the gifts intrusted to him to co-operate with His grace. The active man must use his energy, the silent man his love of retirement, the warm-hearted man his affections to God's glory, without which his natural disposition, however good, will be a snare rather than a blessing; and for want of rightly using such gifts, much evil arises. Therefore utilize all that is good in your natural disposition; till as a skilful husbandman tills the soil, so that it may bring forth such fruit as it can best produce, thereby returning fourfold to God Who gave it.

Give me, O Lord, an earnest heart,
Anxious to do Thy will,
Contented with whatever part
In life 'tis mine to fill.

Fearful of wealth and worldly pride;
Glad, if a low degree,
With even sorrow by my side,
Help me to walk with Thee.

Cautious of all the gauds and glow
By earthly sunshine given,
Choosing the cloudiest paths below,
So they lead up to heaven.

Seventh Sunday after Trinity.

In those days the multitude being very great, and having nothing to eat, Jesus called His disciples unto Him, and saith unto them, I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now been with Me three days, and have nothing to eat. S. MARK viii. 1, 2.

ALL sorts and all ages, men, women, and children, came to our blessed Lord, partly to hear His instructions, and partly to be cured by Him of divers diseases and torments (S. Matthew xv. 30, 31). Thus receiving benefit from Him in their bodies, they were the more inclined to listen to the heavenly instruction which He gave them for the salvation of their souls. And between the two they were so taken up with Him that they continued waiting upon Him three whole days, until all the provisions which they brought with them were exhausted, and then our compassionate Saviour, taking pity on their present hunger and faintness, as He had before on the more grievous infirmities of many of them, put forth His almighty power to provide bread for them, a thing which we never read of His doing for Himself, not even after His forty days' fast. He waited till the Angels ministered unto Him, as when He was weary and sat down on Jacob's well, He waited until the woman came to draw water, and His disciples to bring Him meat. But here we see Him doing that for His poor followers which for Himself He declined doing; He feeds them by miracle.

Art thou weak, afflicted soul ?
I am strong to make thee whole.
Art thou sick, and hast no cure ?
I am thy Physician sure.
Art thou fainting on thy road ?
I am near to bear thy load.
Art thou hungry, thirsty, poor ?
I am rich to bless thy store.
Art thou much with grief oppress ?
I am come to give thee rest.

Seventh Monday after Trinity.

And if I send them away fasting to their own houses, they will faint by the way: for divers of them came from far. S. MARK viii. 3.

OUR Lord might have quieted the people's hunger by a mere act of His will, causing them to feel no such pain and craving, even as He had supported Himself and His prophets under it, through their whole forty days' fast. He might have rained down manna or quails from heaven, as in very old times He had done to His people in the wilderness, and let them gather it for themselves. But it was not His will to feed them in either of these ways. He chose rather to do the whole in a manner through His disciples, consulting them in the first instance, and employing them all along, even as it is, if you mark it, in almost all His mighty works, both of nature and grace. He does us good through others, men and women like ourselves. He gives us life, nourishment, education, tender care of all kinds, through our parents, and through others who are as parents to us. He gives us His Holy Word and His precious Sacrament through His Apostles and Evangelists, and after them through His Bishops and other ministers commissioned by them, and so in this and in His other miraculous feast He does all through His disciples.

Thy ways, O Lord, with wise design,
Are framed upon Thy throne above ;
And every dark or bending line
Meets in the centre of Thy love.

With feeble light, and half obscure,
Poor mortals Thy arrangements view,
Not knowing that the least are sure,
The most mysterious just and true.

My favoured soul shall meekly learn
To lay her reason at Thy throne :
Too weak Thy secrets to discern,
I'll trust Thee for my guide alone.

Seventh Tuesday after Trinity.

And His disciples answered Him, From whence can a man satisfy these men with bread here in the wilderness? S. MARK viii. 4.

FIRST to prove His disciples our Lord points out the sadness of the case. The disciples, in answer, say just the same as any one of us would say in the like circumstances, "From whence can a man satisfy these men with bread here in the wilderness?" They looked at the outside of things, in the natural way, forgetting what themselves had seen, when, there being a still greater multitude, Jesus had fed them miraculously with five loaves and two fishes. We may think it strange that the disciples should forget this so soon, but is it not quite as strange that we should so soon and so often forget His tender providential mercies, so wonderfully shown to us in various ways, and begin to grumble and complain, mistrust Him and envy our brethren as soon as ever things go wrong, and we cannot see our way to amend them? Our Lord bid the disciples at once to put away their doubts, just asking them how many loaves they have, and when they said seven, commanding the people to sit down, and without more ado taking the loaves in His Hands, and blessing them, and beginning to distribute with as little fear of falling short as if there had been seven thousand instead of seven.

Not too anxious for to-morrow,
Not too careless of to-day,
Temperate in joy and sorrow,
Not so often grave as gay ;
By no evil passions driven ;
Envy, malice, bearing none ;
On unkindness unforgiven
Never letting set the sun ;
Grateful for whatever blessing
In its bounty Heaven has sent ;
Ever happy in possessing
Quiet, competence, content.

Seventh Wednesday after Trinity.

And He commanded the people to sit down on the ground : and He took the seven loaves, and gave thanks, and brake, and gave to His disciples to set before them ; and they did set them before the people. And they had a few small fishes : and He blessed, and commanded to set them also before them. S. MARK viii. 6, 7.

OBSERVE that our Lord does it all by benediction. He took the seven loaves, and blessed, and brake, and distributed. Afterwards, when the few small fishes were brought forward, He *blessed*, and commanded to set them also before them. Nothing would He give them without His blessing. Surely we must be very dull if we do not learn hereby to ask God's blessing on all our meals, all our pursuits, all our undertakings, whether for the good of others or for our own. If His blessing be not upon it, how can it do us good? And if even the great Lord and Creator did not account what He gave His people sufficiently sanctified by His touch, but used also His word and prayer, why should we think much to say grace devoutly before and after all our principal meals?

Depart, lukewarmness, hence ! Depart,
Cold torpor of the weary heart !
Thy boundless love, O God the Son,
Draws us, impels us, speeds us on.

Blest Jesus ! who would now deny
For Thee to live, for Thee to die?
Who by Thy death us slaves hast bought,
And, rising, unto freedom brought.

In Thy torn Body let us find
A refuge for the sin-sick mind,
And from the Father's anger rest,
Redeemer, in Thy gentle Breast.

Seventh Thursday after Trinity.

So they did eat, and were filled: and they took up of the broken meat that was left seven baskets. And they that had eaten were about four thousand: and He sent them away. S. MARK viii. 8, 9.

CHRIST teaches us in the same way not to be wasteful. "Gather up the fragments that remain that nothing be lost." What was it to Him, the Maker and Owner of all, Him Who "openeth His Hand and filleth all things living with plenteousness," whether those few crumbs which remained over and above unto them that had eaten were carefully preserved or no? To *Him* it could make no difference: the difference is to *us* His reasonable creatures, whether we will deal reverently and gratefully with the provision which His love makes for us, or whether we will waste it, as no object to us. We should think more of this than we are apt to do. Would that we were always thankful for His unspeakable gifts, never wasteful of them!

My Lord and God, Whose gracious Hand
Hath led me hitherto,
Whatever duty may command,
O give me strength to do!

My duty is, all diligence
To use, and promptness too,
And instantly Thy work commence
I know I ought to do.

Then help me, that from day to day,
With busy hand and true,
The work appointed me I may
Unweariedly pursue.

O let my aim at all times be
Thy glory, Lord, and praise!
Let me in all acknowledge Thee,
And Thou direct my ways.

Seventh Friday after Trinity.

Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness ; and all these things shall be added unto you. S. MATTHEW vi. 33.

WHEN times are hard, or we are afraid of their proving hard, we cannot, it may be, help wondering how we and our children are to get our bread and what else we want in this world. But let it not be unfaithful wondering. Has He not fed us all our lives unto this day? and why should we not trust Him for the little time which yet remains? We see by the loving miracle of the feeding of the four thousand that His blessing is all that is wanted to make a very scanty provision go a very great way. And you may thankfully trust that the longer you wait on Him with patience, the greater and surer will your relief be at the last. Observe why He had compassion on that starving multitude. Not merely because they had nothing to eat, but also because they had been with Him three days, they had persevered in waiting on Him; for all their inconvenience and hunger, therefore, He works this miracle for them, and if any of them had gone away before that time in impatience and fretfulness, that man would have lost his share in the miraculous feast.

I place myself in Jesu's Hands,
And there abide for ever ;
No griefs, no joys, shall loose the bands,
Nor our sweet union sever ;
In those dread days
When earth decays,
Who stays on Him, and Whom He stays,
Shall be preserved for ever.

Seventh Saturday after Trinity.

This is the Bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living Bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this Bread, he shall live for ever: and the Bread that I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. S. JOHN vi. 50, 51.

IF it needed humble trust and patient waiting for the men, women, and children of that company (the four thousand that were fed with seven loaves and a few small fishes) to partake of Christ's outward visible feast, surely He will expect us to be trustful and patient in respect of the Bread which cometh down from heaven. What that Bread is we know; it is the Body and Blood of our Saviour Christ, verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful in the Lord's Supper. That is the seven loaves, the sevenfold or perfect feast, the feast full of all the rich gifts of the Holy Ghost, which He has miraculously provided to sustain us here in the wilderness of this present world. Do not go away from this feast, do not separate yourself from the mount and congregation of God's people; only wait on Him in patience and confidence, and see if He do not, according to the prayer which He hath taught you, give you this day your daily bread, the bread both of your souls and bodies. This day and all the days of your life "commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass." He will save His people and give His blessing unto His inheritance, will feed them and set them up for ever.

Uphold our footsteps in Thy way,
Nor suffer us in heart to stray;
With patience bear, with counsel guide;
From follies wean, from perils hide;
In suffering soothe, in want defend;
Confirm and stablish to the end!

Eighth Sunday after Trinity.

Ye shall know them by their fruits. S. MATTHEW vii. 16.

GOOD men are often evil spoken of by the world, as was the case with our Lord Himself; whereas bad men may be like whited sepulchres, beautiful without, but within full of uncleanness. How are we to know men from their fruits? The fact is, that there will ever shine forth from a sincere, good man a clear and consistent light which cannot be hid. If any one takes diligent care of his own heart, this cannot but be seen in his words and actions, for from the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. His life is of itself an unmistakable living language; deeds are the very tongue of the heart. Shall we look for the sweet fruits of charity from the mere briars and thistles of party spirit and controversy? If we know that any man denies himself daily—that he is meek and gentle under trying provocation—that he is indifferent to the things of the world, and sacrifices his worldly interest without scruple to preserve his Christian principle,—then with him we may expect to find the truth; but more particularly if he denies himself in that which would naturally be his ruling passion or desire, for this we know cannot be done without the especial grace of God.

Free choice doth man possess of good or ill,
All were but mockery else. From Wisdom's way
Too oft perverted by the tainted will,
To his rebellious nature drawn astray;
Therefore an inward monitor is given,
A voice that answers to the law of Heaven.

Frail as he is, and as an infant weak,
The knowledge of his weakness is his strength;
For succour is vouchsafed to those who seek
In humble faith sincere: and when at length
Death sets the disembodied spirit free,
According to their deeds their lot shall be.

Eighth Monday after Trinity.

Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father Which is in heaven. S. MATTHEW vii. 21.

“AN highway shall be there, and it shall be called The way of holiness: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein.” Cleverness is not what we need, but the simplicity of a wayfaring man—of one that travels right onward in the way of Christ. It is “to the meek” and obedient that “mysteries are revealed.” A good man, under God’s teaching, naturally looks to good men; and where he sees great obedience and reverence, he values the words and sayings of such a man; his foot “wears the steps of his door.” Thus good men came to Christ Himself; they looked to His works, and so came to know Him. Christ invited them to look to them, saying, “The works that I do in My Father’s Name, they testify of Me.” “If I do not the works of My Father, believe Me not.” They were constrained to confess that such holiness and goodness could only come from God. And when they were thus brought to Him by witnessing His works they believed His words also; they said, “Thou hast the words of eternal life,” and came to see in Him the Son of God, God over all blessed for evermore.

My soul, wouldst thou this one thing find?

Seek not amid created things;

Leave what is earthly far behind,

O’er Nature heavenward stretch thy wings,
Where God and man are One, in Whom appear
All truth and fulness, thou hast found it here—
The better part, the One thing needful He,
My One, My All, My Joy, Who saveth me.

All perfect wisdom lies in Thee,

As in its primal hidden source;

O let my will submissive be,

And hold henceforth its even course.

Controlled by truth and meekness, from high Heaven
To lowly simple hearts hath wisdom given;
Who knoweth Christ aright, and in Him lives,
Hath won the highest prize that wisdom gives.

Eighth Tuesday after Trinity.

I know it: then Thou shewedst me their doings. JEREMIAH
xi. 18.

WE must more earnestly serve our Lord. We must enter on a kind of contest of holy exertion; prepare our souls for strife with temptation, and understand that exactly in proportion to our greater heartiness in pursuing our salvation will be the vehemence of our enemies' assault. But stronger is He that is in us than he that is against us. We have force through Him in Whose power we confide; for it was to this end that our Lord allowed Himself to be tempted by the tempter, that, as we are guarded by His aid, we should be instructed by His example. For He conquered the adversary by authorities from the Law, not by the exertion of superior might, that by this means He might at once put a higher honour on man, and inflict a heavier punishment on the adversary, in that the foe of mankind was conquered not as it were by God, but by man. He therefore fought, then, that we too might fight afterwards; He conquered that we too might conquer likewise. For there are no works of virtue without the trials of temptation, no faith without probation, no conflict without a foe, no victory without an engagement. Our life lies in the midst of snares, in the midst of battles. If we do not mean to be deceived, we must keep watch; if we do mean to conquer, we must strive.

Strive, when thou art called of God,
When He draws thee by His grace;
Strive, to cast away the load
That would clog thee in the race.

Fight, though it may cost thy life;
Storm the kingdom, but prevail;
Let not Satan's fiercest strife
Make thee, warrior, faint or quail.

Eighth Wednesday after Trinity.

Obey My voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be My people: and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you. JEREMIAH vii. 23.

IF we really love Christ, let us imitate Him. See how obedient He was to all His Father's commands. For we shall not be able to give Him any better fruit of our affection than the imitation of His example. Holy Martyrs have followed Him even to the effusion of their blood, even to the likeness of His Passion; Martyrs have followed Him, but not Martyrs only. The bridge was not sawn asunder after they crossed it; the fountain was not dried up after they had drunk of it. That garden of our Lord has—indeed it has—not only the roses of martyrdom, but also the lilies of virginity, and the ivy of married life, and the violets of widowhood. Let none whatever despair of their vocation. Christ “willeth that all men should be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth.” How ought we to follow Christ? “Christ humbled Himself.” Thou hast, O Christian, what thou must hold. “Christ became obedient.” Why actest thou haughtily? Having gone through His humiliation, and laid death prostrate, Christ ascended into heaven. Let us follow Him. Let us spurn whatever element of delight from things temporal the world brings in upon us; let us condemn its roarings, however fearful. And let him that does so not doubt that he is cleaving to Christ's steps, so that he may say, “My conversation is in heaven.”

O draw, blessed Jesus, Thy children to Thee,
And grant that Thine own we may evermore be.

Eighth Thursday after Trinity.

Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord ; and the people whom He hath chosen for His own inheritance. PSALM xxxiii. 12.

GOD has willed His people to be holy, and separate from all contagion of unrighteousness and iniquity ; to be of such a character, so just, so pious, so pure, so spotless, so simple, that the heathen might find nothing in them to censure, but only to admire, and might use the words of our text when speaking of them. Of such a character ought God's worshippers and servants to be, gentle, grave, thoughtful, pious, blameless, uncorrupt, unspotted, that whosoever sees them should be amazed and admire them, saying, "Truly these men, whose conduct is of such a kind, are men of God." A man of God ought in such wise to exhibit himself and to act, that there may be no one who does not desire to see him and long to hear him ; no one who, having seen him, does not believe him to be a child of God. For there is nothing which God more desires and requires from us than that through our conduct His Name may be magnified by all ; as it is written, "Offer the sacrifice of praise." For this is the sacrifice which God seeks for and loves above all sacrifices, that by means of our just works His Name may everywhere be praised, and He may be proved by works and actions to be the true God of His servants. They do indeed glorify God who employ themselves on that only whereby His Name may be glorified.

So shall my song be of Thy praise,
So shall my life Thy love proclaim,
And all my works and all my ways
Exalt and magnify Thy Name.

Eighth Friday after Trinity.

He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked. I S. JOHN ii. 6.

CHRIST came into the world "to be unto us both a sacrifice for sin, and also an ensample of godly life." He came to die for our redemption, to live for our example. Through Christ we gain justification and sanctification; or in other words, acceptance with God and holiness. We gain an atonement wrought for our sins, and we gain the power of conquering sin by the Holy Ghost working in us the likeness of Christ. It is not enough to have Christ for our "sacrifice" unless we also have Him for our "example;" or rather we should say, we *cannot* have the benefit of that "sacrifice" unless we also copy that "example." We may not accept one part of Christ's work for us, and refuse another part. Christ is "made unto us sanctification and redemption." We may not claim the redemption and pass over the sanctification. The two things must stand or fall together. If we have any part in the "sacrifice," we shall also be made like to the example. The youngest child can understand how pure, holy, patient, and forgiving Jesus Christ was. There is nothing hard here. Let a man only *wish* to take Christ for his example, and he cannot fail to read that example aright. But *there* is the real difficulty in the *wish*. So few really wish to take Christ for their example. If they wish to be religious, they wish for an easier religion than one which sets them so pure and perfect a pattern.

O may we follow undismayed
Where'er our God shall call!
And may His Spirit's present aid
Uphold us lest we fall!

Eighth Saturday after Trinity.

By works was faith made perfect. S. JAMES ii. 22.

FAITH has its work to do here quite as truly as with the redemption of the Cross itself. For faith *must not only* dwell on that most precious truth, it *must not only* be fixed on the Cross of Calvary. There indeed its deepest and most earnest gaze must ever dwell. But it must also pass on to the *daily* life of Jesus. It must dwell on His words and actions. It must make His perfect pattern ever real to our souls. There must be faith in the "example," and faith in the "sacrifice." How far are *we* copying Christ's example? Are we *trying* even to do so? It is a very perfect example. We feel it almost presumptuous to think of imitating what is so heavenly. But are we in any one point growing in likeness to our Lord? Christ was pure and holy. Are we fighting *heartily* against the lusts of the flesh, and longing after holiness? Christ was meek and lowly. Are we curbing our proud thoughts and tempers, and striving to be humble? Christ was merciful and forgiving, and prayed for His murderers on the Cross. Are we ready to forgive those that injure us and to return good for evil? Christ came to do His Father's will. Are we trying to do God's will? What is our hope for hereafter? Is it not to be like Christ? Yes, but except we become like Christ *now*, we shall not be like Him *then*.

Heavenly Father, send Thy Holy Spirit to make us more and more like unto Thy dear Son while we live here on earth, that we may be changed into His glorious likeness, and be meet to dwell with Him in Thy everlasting kingdom hereafter; for the sake of the same Thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Ninth Sunday after Trinity.

And that rock was Christ. I CORINTHIANS x. 4.

FOR although the Israelites drank but on one occasion of that water, and that rock was but once smitten as Christ was but once pierced, and on one occasion only the water flowed from His Side, yet in that once for all is He always, unto the end of the world, as it were smitten for us; always present as our Rock, following us even unto the end, and covering us with His almighty shadow, and ever pouring down for us the Holy Spirit from above, although but once for all sent down as the price of His redemption. So was that smitten rock and the water flowing from it a sign to them in the wilderness that His gracious presence was ever with them, following them throughout and sustaining them. "Lo, I am with you alway." Glory be to Thee, O Lord, for Thy blessed promise never to leave us nor forsake us. May we never leave nor forsake Thee, but ever come into Thy presence with joy and gladness, and so worship and adore Thee on earth, that we may be trained for Thy unceasing service in heaven.

Lord, Thou art with us always,
And never wilt depart;
But in Thy blessed Sacrament
Especially Thou art.

Here let me ever seek Thee,
Here fill me with Thy love,
Until Thou shalt admit me
To my bright home above.

There, dearest Lord and Saviour,
Thou wilt not me disown,
But clothe me in Thy brightness,
And place me near Thy throne.

Then O what bliss to see Thee,
And with Thee to abide,
And never, never leave Thee,
For ever at Thy Side.

Fifth Monday after Trinity.

We should not lust after evil things. I CORINTHIANS x. 6.

WE read of a holy man of old whose love for purity was so great that he could not bear the slightest action or movement, however accidental, which was contrary to it. May God grant us to be like-minded. He used to call it the beautiful whiteness of the soul. However bright and clear a mirror may be, he was wont to say, it becomes clouded by a mere breath, and the lily grows safely among thorns, pure and sweet, till some rude hand touches it. In this spirit he inculcated the most rigorous modesty in every member, in hands, eyes, and speech, not permitting any thoughtlessness or accident to be counted as any excuse for its neglect. S. Ambrose counsels one to whom he writes to keep careful watch over her glances, lest thieves, *i.e.* evil thoughts and desires, should come in at the windows. We ought to keep God always before our eyes, everywhere and always, alone and in company. A great Saint once bade his disciple give heed to go to rest in God's presence, as he would do were our dear Lord present in the flesh in his chamber. You do not behold Him or hear Him, but He is no less present and guards you while you sleep. He recommends as our last waking words, "I sleep, but my heart waketh. Keep me, O Lord, as the apple of Thine Eye ; hide me under the shadow of Thy wings ; keep me from the terrors of night."

Lord, have we angered Thee to-day?
Remember not our sins, we pray,
But let Thy mercy o'er them sweep,
And give us calm and restful sleep.

Ninth Tuesday after Trinity.

Neither be ye idolaters. I CORINTHIANS x. 7.

THE perfection of Christian life is to be filled with the Spirit of Christ. His Spirit must inspire all we do, and breathe upon our most trifling actions. Christ has a right over all our actions, inasmuch as He is the Head over our body. The only return He asks for all His watchful loving care is that you on your part give a watchful loving heed not to displease Him in those trifles which once you would scarce have noticed. The greater God's love for any soul, the greater is the perfection He requires of that soul. "Be ye perfect, even as your Father Which is in heaven is perfect." Do not hinder His work; and if you have been faithless, "your own vineyard you have not kept," confess it in loving penitence, and without delay seek to rule your life according to that higher standard. Meditate upon S. Peter's words, "The time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God." And surely those who by their holy calling are dedicated to Him, members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven, are above all those to whom these words apply. Awful indeed will that judgment be to those who having heard His call, yet have neglected to serve Him absolutely and with every nerve even in little things.

When the threefold Name was spoken,
When the sacred sign was made,
When upon our brows the token
Of our baptism was laid,

Threefold was the sacred promise,
To renounce, believe, and do;
God of mercy, turn not from us
When those vows we here renew.

Ninth Wednesday after Trinity.

Neither let us commit fornication. I CORINTHIANS x. 8.

TRY to set before thyself in thought, if but for a minute in the day, thy Lord's glorified Body as He arose from the dead for thee. The closed tomb could not hold it. The closed doors could not hinder its passing. It was not bounded to this earth. It came and went after the manner of a spirit. He ate and drank with them, He appeared, He vanished out of their sight, to show how His nature was above the laws of ours. What is it now? Full it is of the majesty and beauty and glory of God. And such, if we attain, are our poor bodies to be, conformed to His glorious Body. Misuse them, then, not; keep them pure by His grace, that they may be made like our Lord's. It is not long for thee to wait for harvest, every day is thy seed-time; day by day thou mayest sow that which thou shalt reap in life eternal. A day lost, wherein thou doest nothing whereby to please God, is a loss for eternity. Every day thou mayest store something for eternity. Every day thou mayest be enlarged by the grace of God to contain the love of God, yea, God Who is love for all eternity. The prize set before us is gladness itself, life, glory, peace, pleasure, bliss, sweetness, overwhelming joy, and all in one, for all shall be in God, and God in all, Himself the life, the joy of all who love.

O vision all too bright
For sinful man, who still must walk in fear,
Till death removes the veil and makes the vision clear.

Pinth Thursday after Trinity.

Neither murmur ye. I CORINTHIANS X. 10.

LET us not then be wearied, though the strife be at times wearisome ; let us not relax, though it need much watchfulness. Christ's burden is light, for it will displace the heavy burdens of thine own ; the burden of thy sin ; the burden of thy passions ; the burden of thy restlessness ; the burden of thy desires ; the burden of thy fears. Christ's burden, the larger it is, the lighter is it ; the closer thou fit it to thyself, the more it will free thee ; the more thou takest it on thee, the more it will uplift thee. It will be borne by thee, but it will itself upbear thee where there shall be no yoke or burden more, but the free calm rest and dwelling in everlasting holy joy.

When conscience grieves for what is past,
May I on Thee my burden cast,
Resolved in Thee to do my best,
Resigned to leave the rest
With Thee—and so contented be
With what Thou thinkest best for me.

Resolved that I my part fulfil
In what I know to be Thy will ;
Resigned in that I will rejoice,
Which is in Thy dear choice ;
If Thou wilt only in Thy love
Prepare me for Thy house above.

If this were but my constant heart,
That faith in me would have a part,
Which can the mountains set afar
Which our obedience bar ;
By me—in me Thy will be done,
So shall I the glad way of Thy commandments run.

Ninth Friday after Trinity.

Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. I CORINTHIANS x. 12.

AN early Greek bishop adds to these words of warning, "If S. Paul thus exhorts those who think they stand, what must be said to those who cannot think that they stand, but must know full well that they are fallen?" What must we ourselves do but make haste to arise, by instantly seizing the Hand of Him Who lifteth up those that are down—by seizing hold of His Hand and not letting Him go? We are surrounded by occasions of falling. There is no one but has his peculiar temptations, more or less, waiting on Him. Some owing to his peculiar disposition, some to his circumstances in life, some to his past sins; some one day assail him, others the next; some on one side, and when he is on his guard against them, some on another side coming upon him; some in thought, some in act or word; some in the flesh, others in the spirit; some in all these together. And by these temptations for the most part men are more or less overcome; they give way sometimes with a struggle, often without an effort; they yield often as a matter of course, as if from time to time it were a little matter, or as if the temptation were too great, and by its very greatness smoothed the way of their besetting sin. Remember, no temptation is an excuse for sin; for whatever it may be, it is only such as man's present state of probation admits of. God is the Disposer of all things. He knows, He measures, He deals out all events.

He maketh kings to sit in sovereignty;
He maketh subjects to their power obey;
He pulleth down, He setteth upon high;
He gives to this, from that He takes away;
For all we have is His: what He list do He may.

Pfinty Saturday after Trinity.

Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve. Then the devil leaveth Him, and, behold, Angels came and ministered unto Him. S. MATTHEW iv. 10, 11.

OBSERVE our blessed Lord does not answer the tempter with human arguments, there is no stopping to converse with him, as our first parents did ; but the Scripture, which is open to the humblest believer, is all that wisdom requires. They that are tempted may flee into this as a tower of refuge and are safe. And blessed are they who answer the tempter by the language of their lives, whose only wish is to avoid these his manifold insinuations, in whatever shape they occur, and to worship and serve God only. Our dear Lord refused to listen to Satan, but waited patiently upon God ; and God, in His own good time, ministers by Angels to His wants. Our Lord's temptation is of all things in the world the matter of greatest concern to us, so is there nothing more worthy of our deep consideration ; for it is calculated to impress upon us beyond anything the reality of our own state of probation as connected with the fall of our first parents, of that enemy with whom we have to contend, and of our restoration in Christ. Further, as the declaration of His Sonship from heaven, preceding His temptation, seems to say to us all who partake of His Baptism, " My son, if thou come to serve the Lord, prepare thy soul for temptation," fasting is the best means of preparation, and our only safety under temptation is a strict obedience to God's Word, for

They who would in Jesus sleep
Must in life with Jesus keep.

Tenth Sunday after Trinity.

Concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant. I CORINTHIANS xii. 1.

"I BELIEVE in the Holy Ghost." What does that involve? If words mean anything, if I have any sort of belief in the self-consistency of truth, it involves that I believe in the existence of a supersensuous world, within and upon which the Divine Spirit lives and acts. The Divine and Infinite Spirit acts on our human spirit. He penetrates it, lightens it, warms it, and strengthens it. The Eternal Spirit, too, has set up in the world a school of morals; He whispers within the soul a deeper and purer code than nature dreams of. See the contrast between the works of our lower self, animated by the principle of concupiscence, and the fruits of the Spirit. The fruits of the Spirit are no mere negation of the vigorous forms of wickedness which make up the catalogue of the works of the flesh. They rise higher, they have about them an undemonstrative character, singularly contrasting with the ostentation of natural morals, and imply that in the school of the Spirit, the soul, like Mary at the feet of Jesus, is listening to a Teacher Who has awed her into the silence which becomes self-knowledge. How unnatural, men say, are the fruits of the Spirit! They are unnatural; not in the sense of contradicting nature so much as in that of transcending it.

Come, Spirit, from above!

And with Thy gentle might
Heal us, and help us to be good.

Tenth Monday after Trinity.

The Spirit giveth life. 2 CORINTHIANS iii. 6.

It is the Spirit that quickeneth. He does not merely prescribe, He transforms. He is perpetually asserting His presence by His spiritual transformations. He makes the feeble strong, the melancholy bright, the cold-blooded fervent, the irascible gentle, the uninstructed wise, the conceited humble, and the timid unflinching. And now, as of old, He filleth the hungry with good things, but the rich He hath sent empty away. He has but a scant measure of endowments to bestow on those who find in the things of sense, in the pursuit or worship of wealth and rank and reputation, their deepest and most solid satisfaction. He gives Himself most fully to those who ask for Him secretly and often. O blessed gift, so bounteously given in Baptism, and then again and again repeated, of the Spirit of Christ ! We seek Him without, and we find Him within us ; we seek Him in great assemblies, and we find Him in solitude ; we seek Him in the understanding, we find Him in the heart. He enters the soul when all the doors of sense are shut ; He gives His benediction to each and all of its faculties, "Peace be unto you." The soul hears Him, it sees Him not ; the soul feels Him, yet as if insensibly, and His presence is itself that peace of God which passeth all understanding.

Ah, sweet Consoler ! though we cannot
Love Thee as Thou lovest us,
Yet if Thou deign'st our hearts to kindle,
They will not be always thus.

Holy Ghost ! come upon Thy children,
Give us grace, and make us Thine ;
Thy tender fires within us kindle,
Blessed Spirit ! Dove Divine !

Tenth Tuesday after Trinity.

The light of the body is the eye : if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness ! S. MATTHEW vi. 22.

THE great test of sincerity is awfully enforced in these words of our Saviour's. To know one's own weakness, to know that this weakness involves sin, and yet to shrink from the needful effort, from cutting off the dangerous occasion, what is this but hypocrisy. To confess one's weakness, and the fall it caused, to seek for absolution and peace, and yet no change to follow, what but the hypocrite's false anodyne? To be honest with God is, alas ! one of the rarest gifts. There is a subtle dishonesty, which is one of the most frequently besetting sins of the devout. Convictions of sin are not wanting. Tears are not wanting. Resolutions are not wanting. The vision of righteousness and of judgment is ever present to the mind. What is wanting is the honest dealing with one's own weakness. Even as it is the triumph of the revealing power of the Spirit to show to the soul its real self, to show selfishness its special character of selfishness ; so it is the triumph of the transforming power of the Spirit to save the soul from the consequences of its own characteristic weakness, constraining it to turn away from the ensnaring object, to refuse to yield to the seductive sweetness.

Where Thou art, Lord, there is no ill,
For evil's self Thy light can kill :
O let that light upon us rise !
Lord, heal our wounds, and cleanse our stains,
Fountain of grace, and with Thy rains
Our barren spirits fertilize.

Tenth Wednesday after Trinity.

My Spirit shall not always strive with man. GENESIS vi. 3.

THIS is a very important statement, as it teaches that the Holy Spirit may strive for awhile with those who resist Him and are lost in consequence. So that one of the earliest notices of the work of the Spirit seems expressly given to warn men that His work on the heart is not irresistible. Some find a difficulty in believing this. The very strength of their faith in the power and grace of the Spirit indisposes them to believe that His presence can ever be given in vain; no truth is more distinctly revealed than that some measure of His influence can be effectually resisted. Indeed the converse of this, when we come fairly to consider it, seems the more incredible view of things; for how could God justly condemn men unless He had first warned them, and convinced them, and in some degree enlightened them?

O faith ! thou workest miracles
Upon the hearts of men,
Choosing thy home in those same hearts
We know not how nor when.

To one thy grave unearthly truths
A heavenly vision seem ;
While to another's eye they are
A superstitious dream.

To one the deepest doctrines look
So naturally true,
That when he learns the lesson first
He hardly thinks it new.

Thy choice, O God of goodness ! then
I lovingly adore :
O give me grace to keep Thy grace,
And grace to merit more !

Tenth Thursday after Trinity.

Pray with the spirit. I CORINTHIANS xiv. 15.

Now prayer, to be real, must be the concentrated energy of our whole spirit, and we must open ourselves to God. There is nothing which is at once so reanimating and so exhausting as prayer. This pouring out of ourselves, this resolute holding of our souls in a fixed attitude, be it of surveying sin for confession, or listening for absolution, or of intercession, or of supplication, or of praise, requires the fullest tension of our powers; and the realizing God's presence, the laying hold by faith of Him as our portion, the casting ourselves indeed upon Christ the Lord, the committing the whole stream and utterance of thought, longing, feeling, to blend with His prevailing intercessions; the guarding against anything coming between Him and us; the watching, above all, against the intrusion of self between ourselves and Him, against the growing up of a morbid self-contemplation under a religious light instead of the simple fixing of the eye of faith on Him;—all this taxes to the utmost all the faculties of our souls. From this, then, it is that idleness tempts us to shrink. We are tempted to muse, to lose ourselves in abstractions, to waste our time of devotion in an endless flitting of the soul from thought to thought; settling nowhere, mastering nothing, we are tempted by every conceivable temptation to escape from the tension and closeness and exhaustion of wrestling. "I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me."

Man's weakness waiting upon God
Its end can never miss,
For men on earth no work can do
More angel-like than this.

Tenth Friday after Trinity.

Gird up the loins of your mind. I S. PETER i. 13.

LET us strive aright. We must overcome the earthly heart if we would pray, and it is by prayer that it must be overcome. Communion with God must raise our affections heavenwards; but we must watch as well as pray, if we would commune with our Lord. No man can rise from a slothful, or self-indulgent, or worldly life into the heights of heavenly contemplation. As well might the snared bird with the clinging lime upon his wing expect to soar upward to the skies, as the soul which is heavy with earthly cares and pleasures and indulgences mount up to the pure atmosphere of God's revealed presence. He who would, in his hour of prayer, find the presence of God, and hold communion with his Lord, must live in habitual watchfulness; must taste lightly and with self-recollectedness even of lawful pleasures. The same rule, too, must govern his business as his pleasures. He may fearlessly discharge whatever duty God puts upon him, and he may do it with all his might, but he must be careful not to lade himself with the thick clay of unnecessary occupations. And in the busiest life there must be pauses of retirement; times for thought and self-examination; times when the overheated wheels of continual motion may rest and cool; times when in the stillness of the spirit the dews of God's grace may fall with refreshing power upon its drooping verdure, and when

The sun is gone,
Thou art alone,
Rest in the shadow of the Rock.

Tenth Saturday after Trinity.

*Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake,
and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive in your prayers.*
ROMANS xv. 30.

PRAYER must make a life of action spiritual, and action must make a life of prayer real. Pray for the spirit of prayer; pray for the power to pray. Prayer is eminently the gift of God. Your very prayer is given you by God; it is His work in you, His before it is yours; the working of His grace within you, without which you could never have prayed. Ask, then, continually from Jesus the power to ask. It is through Him only that you can approach unto the Father; unto that presence you can only enter sprinkled with His Blood. He takes you by the hand and leads you in: He offers up for you the poor earth-bound prayer, which scarcely struggles upward from your heavy heart; but joined to His intercession it mounts at once to God. He bears the golden censer, and much incense is there in it, even the prayers of all Saints. With that prevailing breath your creeping supplications intermingle. Fear not, then, for the intercession of the Eternal Son must lose its power and prevalence before the faintest whisper of the penitent heart can be repulsed or overlooked.

Sweet Jesus! teach me how to prize
These tedious hours when I,
Foolish and mute before Thy Face,
In helpless worship lie.

Prayer was not meant for luxury,
Or selfish pastime sweet;
It is the prostrate creature's place
At his Creator's Feet.

Eleventh Sunday after Trinity.

A contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise. PSALM li. 17.

THE impulses of the heart are nature's instincts. Contrition does not necessarily rise above ordinary sorrows as a sorrow. Sensations vary as the temperament varies. Contrition is not to be measured by the sensible tenderness which accompanies it; its only true test is its strength of purpose. Contrition rises above all other sorrow by the determination of the will, by the inward setting of the silent heart in stern preparation to wait upon God; its power is seen in the changes taking place in the higher regions of the soul, where great resolves maintain their sway, and self is being subdued through the strong grasp of faith fastening upon God. We do not judge of the movements of the great deep by the splash of the waves which make their wild play upon the shore, but by the long silent roll far out at sea. So, likewise, the secret current of the steadfast will, not the impulsive fluctuation of the tender sensibilities, is the true evidence of the requickened soul yielding itself to the inspirations of the Holy Spirit, the inworking presence of God. Wouldst thou undergo all loss, bear all denial, use all effort, rather than knowingly consent to a single sin? Then be assured thou hast passed from death to life, and God has enfolded thee within the powers of the world to come.

We hope to see God's Face,
At last, in heaven on high,
When we have changed this mortal place
For immortality.

Eleventh Monday after Trinity.

Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God Which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure. PHILIPPIANS ii. 12, 13.

THE apprehension in the soul of the quickening power of God is the groundwork of the energy of will to work with Him. As we rise to the level of a living faith in the work of God, we are enabled to work also. There are three chief stages of the life of God in the soul, from its first dawning to its meridian height of glory. They are known in spiritual theology as the purgative, the illuminative, and the unitive. How marvellously throughout its wondrous course is the soul's renewed life identified with the life of the Incarnate God! These three stages of spiritual advancement correspond with three distinct mysteries in our Lord's life; for it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren in all things, and He is like them in this. The three mysteries which correspond with our three successive stages of advancing life are His Circumcision, His Baptism, His Ascension. Our Lord's Circumcision exhibited the truth that the law of purity, of perfect cleansing, was fulfilled in man's nature. His Baptism was the increased endowment of His Humanity with the fullest illumination of the Holy Ghost. There was a further development of the glory of His Humanity when He assumed its spiritual, heavenly condition, in which He ascended to His Father's Side, and in the flesh was seated at His Right Hand.

Wherefore, sinner, haste to these
Fountains of salvation;
Life thou mayest draw therefrom,
And illumination;
Cure thou mayest find for sin,
Strength to meet temptation;
Refuge mayest thou gain against
Satan's condemnation.

Eleventh Tuesday after Trinity.

They will go from strength to strength. PSALM lxxxiv. 7.

It is not that in spiritual life one stage of progress ceases as the other begins. They run into each other, and neither the one nor the other in this life is ever perfect. We are but imperfect disciples in each stage of amendment. There is a progress in the order in which the one succeeds the other. It commences as we first arise to struggle out of sin. The striving against evil thoughts, the purifying of unclean affections, the restraining of undisciplined tempers, the mortification of intemperate appetites, the extinction of jealousies, of selfishness, of covetousness. As the inward strugglings subside, the renewed spirit, strong in its recovered purity, stretching forward, gives itself to the study of virtue, of the graces in their different kinds, and to the increase of spiritual holiness. Obedience to rule, patience under pain, peacefulness under humiliation, thankfulness under trial, the balanced discipline of the will, a life of recollection and heavenly-mindedness, are being formed. Then there rises the further height, when the soul is set to fulfil all its service in unison with God, to bring each thought into obedience to Christ, to think as God thinks, to work as God works, to have the same designs, the same ends, to have His glory so constantly before the mind, so to see Him in everything, so to refer everything to Him, and unite the will so closely to His that life becomes more and more lost in God.

Christ in their heart, and on their brow His sign,
Loving their God, and ever loved by Him.

Eleventh Wednesday after Trinity.

He that humbleth himself shall be exalted. S. LUKE XIV. 11.

THE great test of advancement of spiritual life is the grace of humility. When the natural tendencies of self-assertion and self-glorying are yielding to the growth of lowliness and simplicity, a true conversion is being worked. The tendency to self-aggrandizement, the wish "to be as Gods," was developed within the soul of man even before the state of supernatural righteousness, the Paradisiacal condition of man's nature, was lost. Pride was a cause, not a consequence, of the Fall. It is, therefore, specially inherent and rooted in us. As it awoke before the first transgression, so it remains underlying all other impulses of evil. It may have been because our life, throughout all our race, has this fundamental evil at work within it, that our Lord came in a state so marked by lowliness and self-sacrifice. It might seem to have been the one end of the manifestation of Himself. He selects humility as the distinguishing grace which was to be His true characteristic likeness. "Learn of Me ; for I am meek and lowly in heart." We must regard this grace as an essential test of an amended life. Our life is amended in proportion as we cease to put forward self, as we grow in humility, self giving way, silently retiring more and more, being hidden even if possible from oneself ; the spirit of unceasing sacrifice, which delights to be in itself nothing, unobservedly offering all that one is, or can do, before the Sacred Presence in which we ever move, the Beginning and Ending of our life.

Give we glory to the Head,
O'er the members love be shed !

Eleventh Thursday after Trinity.

Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God.
REVELATION iii. 2.

THE onward advance of an amended life ceases not till we have reached even unto the Father. Our thoughts must rise to the development of which the boundless capacities of renewed humanity may be hereafter receptive, which can be attained only within the regions of the Infinite and the Eternal. Our greatness is not so much in what we here attain, but in what we may attain hereafter. The possible reach of grace is too great to be compassed by any present rule. The measure of the stature of Christ is too vast to suppose that any present attainment can be adequate to the conception realized. All is now "in part." "Now we know in part." Only "when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away." S. Paul says, "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after." "I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." We judge of the future by the tendencies of the present. The upward growth will be according to the bent of the lower stem. We cannot see God, but we can see what tends towards God. Lord,

Be it mine
One law to cherish and to track one line,
Straight on towards heaven to press with single bent,
To know and love my God, and then to die content.

Eleventh Friday after Trinity.

My grace is sufficient for thee: for My strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong. 2 CORINTHIANS xii. 9, 10.

THE poor deformed races of men who creep along the frozen seas, if removed to the sunny south, rise to a nobler stature and developed powers. This same law nourished Christian hope through the belief that the faint feeble beginnings of this season of struggles and fears, while the corruptible body weigheth down the soul, far off from God, when transferred to more genial skies, shall, if not here, yet there, expand into their predestined fulness; and all whose eyes shall then behold God, shall grow into the perfect likeness of God, in the power of the vision of God. We are saved more by hope than by actual attainment; more by tastes cherished, by movements onward, than by conquests completely gained, or ends completely compassed. You mourn that you have not attained the graces you seek; you are ashamed to speak of the littleness of your amendment. Be it so. But can you feel assured that the character which is being formed in you is true to your vocation; that the increases of grace are growing as surely as the concentric rings which on the trunk of the oak show the annual increase of its bulk; that the character being formed in you is such as would, in the more congenial atmosphere of your Heavenly Father's home, surely assume the very form and likeness of Christ, even as the risen body shall be "fashioned after His glorious Body"? Then surely all is well.

Eleventh Saturday after Trinity.

Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. GALATIANS vi. 7.

WE must ever bear in mind that we are on our probation. Though in our Father's house there are many mansions, and the Son is gone to prepare a place for us, yet "not any thing can enter there that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but [only] they which are written in the Lamb's book of life." The highest joy reserved for the creature in heaven, the joy of our Lord, is not the joy of those who have never known sin. It has been beautifully said that the pearls on the gates of Paradise are the tears of penitents. The entrance into the heavenly city is through penitential sorrow turned into eternal joys. And surely the joy of our Lord, the joy over which Angels rejoice, is the mingled strain of hearts which, as they are lost in God, still bear the memory of how great has been the forgiveness of how great sins, to whom heaven is all the more precious because of the hell out of which they have been raised; who are penetrated with the consciousness of undeserved compassion, while being filled with rapture at the bliss into which they are translated; in whom the consciousness of forgiving love, and of grace perfected in Divine beauty, melt into one fulness of ecstasy. It is the joy in which the sense of sorrow and fear past enhances the sense of present ensured endless beatitude; the joy of rest after toil. It is the joy of the redeemed, who sing the new song.

To Him Who to redeem
Our race came down from heaven,
Praise with the Father evermore,
And Holy Ghost be given.

Twelfth Sunday after Trinity.

*Teach me Thy way, O Lord, and I will walk in Thy truth :
O knit my heart unto Thee, that I may fear Thy Name. I will
thank Thee, O Lord my God, with all my heart : and will praise
Thy Name for evermore. PSALM lxxxvi. 11, 12.*

WHEN we look back on our past life we cannot but be astonished at the evidences of God's mercy and care which have surrounded us. All our life is full of His goodness. God has averted many dangers from us, given us many comforts, raised up friends, preserved to us loving relations—perhaps we have been blessed with outward prosperity and success in our undertakings ; and these things God has bestowed upon us in consequence of our desires or in answer to our prayers. But has God nothing in store which He wishes to bestow better than these, which He holds back because we desire it not ? These are indeed tokens of His love, but they are such as should make us ashamed, such as Christ may have granted us with a sigh that we wished for nothing better. No ; there is nothing more affecting than these mercies of God. He would teach us by these how ready He is to give what is of infinitely greater worth, if we ask in faith and desire it. Daniel is called “a man of desires.” We are not men of desires, our desires are very weak and poor, because our love is small. May our Saviour grant

His love of us may teach us how
To love Him in return :
Love cannot help but grow more free
The more its transports burn.

Twelfth Monday after Trinity.

In every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. PHILIPPIANS iv. 6.

It is certain that the prayer of faith is always heard and answered of God, and he that prays in faith comes sooner or later to feel assured of this, and to know that his prayer is answered; it may be not in the way which he first desired and thought of, yet doubtless in the best of all ways. Add therefore thanksgiving to prayer; thanksgiving for the past as well as requests for future mercies are but the expression of true faith. Thanksgiving for past blessings is the best pledge and plea we can offer for future hopes. Thanksgiving opens and disposes the heart to God, and by acknowledging Him as the Author of all the good we have received, induces us to look to Him the more in prayer. And thus it is that in the Psalms prayers and thanksgivings are so blended together. This of itself shows the effect of prayer, how it disposes us to lose ourselves in the sense of God's goodness.

My Shepherd is the Lord ; I know
No care or craving need.

He leads me where the waters glide,
The waters soft and still,
And homeward He will gently guide
My wandering heart and will.
He brings me on the righteous path,
E'en for His Name's dear sake.

I fear no ill, for Thou, O God,
With me for ever art ;
Thy shepherd's staff, Thy quieting rod,
'Tis they console my heart.

O nought but love and mercy wait
Through all my life on me,
And I within my Father's gate
For long bright years shall be.

Twelfth Tuesday after Trinity.

Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves ; but our sufficiency is of God. 2 CORINTHIANS iii. 5.

S. THOMAS said, "Except I shall touch, except I shall put my finger into His Side, I will not believe." His fellow-disciples all announce the fact to him, and he believes not. As yet it was not the day which the Lord had made. Let Him come, let the Head of this day come, and let Him say patiently, gently, and not angrily, for He is a Physician, "Come, come and touch this, and believe. Thou saidst, 'Unless I shall touch, unless I shall put my finger there, I will not believe.' Come, touch, put thy finger there, and be not faithless, but believing." He actually did put His hand there, and made his faith complete. For what is the fulness of faith? That Christ should not be believed in merely as Man, or simply as God, but as God and Man. This is the fulness of faith. When the scars of His Saviour were presented to his touch, he touched, and exclaimed, "My Lord and my God." He touched the Man—he recognised the God. He touched the Flesh—he thought of the Word. This Word allowed His Flesh to be crucified, nails to be driven through His Flesh; His Flesh to be pierced with a spear, and His Flesh to be laid in a sepulchre. This Word raised up His Flesh, presented it to be gazed on by His disciples' eyes, and to be handled by their hand. They touch, and exclaim, "'My Lord and my God,' my sufficiency is of Thee."

Read and confess the Hand Divine
That drew thy likeness here so true in every line.
For all thy rankling doubts so sore,
Love thou thy Saviour still,
Him for thy Lord and God adore.

Twelfth Wednesday after Trinity.

Lord, increase our faith. S. LUKE xvii. 5.

OFFER God your heart, to the end that He may make Himself the entire Master of it. Beseech Him to make you entirely faithful to Him, that you may possess more and more that faith which is the eye of the soul, which God has given us to behold Himself. Backward, we by faith behold God creating us, and we see our own fall; we behold His holiness and goodness and love forming us to love Him everlastingly; and when we had fallen, by faith we see Him, the Father, for us willing that God the Son should take our fallen nature, should be born, despised, crucified, die for us. By faith we see God the Son willing for our sakes to become Man. We see our dear Lord and Redeemer on the Cross. Faith sees past and to come in the light of God, and is sure of them. The death of our Lord is to faith the eternal counsel of the ever-blessed Trinity, the unceasing Source of all spiritual blessings. Each act of His sufferings is a part of the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God; each is a mystery of love, whereon the soul shall dwell in love for ever. Faith gazes on Him, because He has first caught and fixed its gaze. It sees, because He has given it eyes to see.

Bidding celestial brightness shine,
Where else were but a formless mine.
Where these dead walls her heaven-born aid
And secret spirit shall pervade,
Terrestrial things become Divine.

Twelfth Thursday after Trinity.

Faith which worketh by love. GALATIANS v. 6.

To faith which loves, things seen fade from sight, things heard fall dull upon the ear ; it will be unmoved by all outward things, for it has an inward sight and an inward hearing and an inward touch whereby it beholds Him dying on the Cross for love of us, and hears Him pray for us, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," and looks on Him Whom by our sins we sinners pierced, and catches the look wherewith He looked on Magdalene and the thief, and in the shadow of His Cross feels itself protected and healed. Yea, faith can enter into that cleft of the rock opened for us, whence gushed "the Fountain open for sin and for uncleanness," and there it finds a refuge. The Cross is not far off ; not over the seas in the Holy Land, nor removed by length of time. Faith sees it close at hand, and clasps it and loves it, and is crucified on it, with Him dying to itself, with its Lord nailed to it, motionless to its own desires, dead to the world, and living to Him. Nor is heaven far off to faith. For where its Lord is, there is heaven. Faith is with Him, present with Him in spirit, though absent in the body ; a penitent amid those who around the throne sing, "Holy, Holy, Holy." Although as yet unfit to enter, where nothing defiled can enter, it lives and loves in the city of the living God, the Heavenly Jerusalem.

Dear precious Lamb, Who once wast slain
To free my soul from Satan's chain,
O how I long to reach that place
Where I shall see Thee face to face.

Twelfth Friday after Trinity.

Faith and love. I THESSALONIANS v. 8.

As love is the life of faith, so with the increase of love faith increaseth. Even from man towards man faith and love grow together. The more we love, the more we understand and the more we trust one another. We trust because we love, and by loving, know God. We can only know God by loving Him. S. Paul says, "I know in Whom I have believed." Want of love is the cause of all want of faith. Did we fully love God, who could for a moment doubt of Him? Who could repine at any loss, or pain, or want, or sickness, or bereavement, if he loved God with his whole soul and heart and strength? For strong love can have no hard thoughts of God. All mistrust of God implies that He is not all-good or all-wise. But love liveth by good works. Love cannot live torpid. Even in human love, love which never did deeds of love would grow cold and die. We love those most to whom we do most good. Love is perhaps increased more by doing than by receiving good, at least by doing good out of the love of God. Acts of love do not prove only that we have a living faith, they increase it. For to do good is to use the grace of God; and on the faithful use of grace, more grace is given. "Faith worketh by love."

Many a gift did Christ impart,
Noblest of them all is love :
Love, a balm within the heart
That can all its pains remove ;
Love, a star most bright and pure ;
Love, a gem of priceless worth,
Richer than man knows on earth.

Twelfth Saturday after Trinity.

Stand fast in the faith, be strong. I CORINTHIANS xvi. 13.

ACT faithfully, according to thy degree of light, and thou shalt see more clearly. Hearken to the low whispers of His voice within thee, and thou shalt hear more distinctly. Above all, do not stifle any motions of conscience, for this were to deaden faith. If thou art in doubt how to act, set the day of judgment before thee, and act now as thou wouldest then wish that thou hadst acted. Wean thyself from pleasures of sense, if thou wouldest have strong faith. Be not taken up with an earthly future, if thou wouldest look beyond the veil, and behold Him Who is Invisible. Be not anxious about little things, if thou wouldest learn to trust God with thine all. Act upon faith in little things, commit thy daily cares and anxieties to Him, and He will strengthen thy faith for any greater trials. Rather give thy whole self into God's Hands, and so trust Him to take care of thee in lesser things, as being His, for His own sake Whose thou art. Meditate daily on the things of eternity. By the grace of God do something daily which thou wouldest wish to have done when that day cometh. Especially in any temptation of Satan, call quickly to mind Whose thou art, in Whom thou hast believed. *Above* all things, *in* all things look unto Jesus,

Whose gifts can ne'er be told,
In bounty plenteous,
Hail ! Name so precious to the ear !
Sweet Jesus ! Name which all revere !
May nought on earth prevail to tear
This title from our heart.

Thirteenth Sunday after Trinity.

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind.
S. LUKE x. 27.

JESUS said, "Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live." Does our Lord mean, that in thus fulfilling the righteousness of the Law, there would be found eternal life? If so, how is this to be reconciled with what S. Paul says, that the Law could not possibly give life? The reason is this, that thus fulfilling the Law, in loving God, would bring to the end of the Law, which is Christ. For God is only known, or loved, or believed, as He is seen in Christ; Christ is the manifestation of God; the Law is the schoolmaster, teaching the love of God, in order to bring to Christ. Christ only is Love and Life. We can only have within us love or life, so far as Christ is in us. Here He lays down for us the great principle of love as fulfilling both the Law and the Gospel, in which is the union of man through Christ with God. "No sinner," says S. Augustine, "as such is to be loved; but every man as man is to be loved, for the sake of God. But God is to be loved for His own sake; and if God is more to be loved than any man, every one ought to love God more than himself; and another man is to be more loved than our own body, because he is capable of enjoying God, which the body cannot."

Religion hath a mightier power,
Itself eternal, sure it can
Eternalize the works of man.

Thirteenth Monday after Trinity.

And love thy neighbour as thyself. S. MATTHEW xix. 19.

IF you wish to know who your neighbour is whom you are bound to love, it is he who needs your assistance. The word neighbour is more expressive in the Greek and Latin languages, it is he who approaches nearest to you. We are to love all men; but in doing so are to love most those who need it most. Now how can this be? It is only by loving God. It is by loving men because God loves them, and as beloved of Him, and because we ourselves love Him. And therefore it is the second commandment; it cannot stand alone, but another goes before it, the first and great commandment, which is the love of God. If we love our neighbour because we love God, then we shall love him in some measure as we love ourselves. We may dislike various persons. Consider how they are loved of God, surely as much as we ourselves are. Think how God loves them, and you will learn to be merciful, even as your Father in heaven is merciful.

Shall we the mother love who bore to earth,
And cherished our unheeding infancy;
And love not Thee, by Whose sore agony
We have been born unto a better birth?
Shall we the father love whom our rude will
Hath grieved so often, yet doth love us still?
Shall we the sister love who evermore,
Still present e'er in absence, watcheth o'er
Our weariness; loved friend, or brother dear;
And all of good and lovely dwelling here?
And love not Thee, from Whom all to our need,
In parent, sister, friend, or brotherhood,
All that is good or lovely doth proceed,
Faint emanations from the only Good?

Thirteenth Tuesday after Trinity.

Let us go on unto perfection. HEBREWS vi. 1.

A SAINT of old once said: "I hear of nothing but perfection on every side, so far as talk goes, but I see very few people who really practise it. Everybody has his own notion of perfection. One man thinks that it lies in the cut of his clothes, another in fasting, a third in almsgiving, in meditation, in some special gift of contemplation, or in extraordinary gifts or graces; but they are all mistaken, as it seems to me, because they confuse the means or the results with the cause. For my part, the only perfection I know is a hearty love of God, and to love one's neighbour as oneself. Without these there can be no real perfection. Charity is the only 'bond of perfectness' between Christians, the only virtue which rightly unites us to God and man. Such union is our final aim and end. No virtues, however great they seem, are worth anything without charity. Discipline and meditation are admirable means whereby to advance towards perfection so long as they are carried on in and through charity. But it will not do to seek perfection in any such means, rather in the end to which they do but lead. The only way to attain that love of God is by loving. If you want to love God, go on loving Him more and more."

And wouldst thou reach, rash scholar mine,
Love's high unruffled state?
Awake! thy easy dreams resign,
First learn thee how to hate.

Hatred of sin and zeal and fear
Lead up the holy hill;
Track them, till charity appear
A self-denial still.

Thirteenth Wednesday after Trinity.

Fulfil your works, your daily tasks. EXODUS v. 13.

REAL devotion to God is compatible with every state of life. It has been likened to the liquid we pour into a vessel, which at once adapts itself to any shape. What, then, do we mean by being devout in our own calling? We mean fulfilling every duty which it lays upon us with fervour, diligence, energy, and cheerfulness, for the love of God, and with a view to His honour and glory. Ordinary duties done with fervour become religious acts; energy and brightness in their performance promote charity; and thus he who carries out this rule is really devout in his vocation and serves God after His own heart, fulfilling His will. Love and devotion are as much akin to each other as flame is to fire. Love is a spiritual fire, and when it bursts forth into flame we call it devotion; devotion only adds to the fire of love that glowing flame which makes it ready, active, and diligent not merely in keeping God's commandments, but in obeying His heavenly inspirations and counsels. One who has God's grace and strives to preserve a pure heart need not fear; there is no position so dangerous but may be held safely under this heavenly protection. We find Abraham among idolaters, Lot amid the grossest sinners, and Job in the land of Uz. S. Bernard never ceased striving to advance in Divine love. Although he was occupied in the affairs of state, he always turned everything to God's glory. He was always united to God; His purity was ever spotless, His love and humility ever overflowing.

Serve God before the world; let Him not go
Until thou hast a blessing, then resign
The whole unto Him, and remember who
Prevailed by wrestling ere the sun did shine.
Pour oil upon the stones, weep for thy sin,
Then journey on and have an eye to heaven.

Thirteenth Thursday after Trinity.

Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God. PHILIPPIANS i. 11.

THE most important duty of every faithful Christian is to be continually seeking to perfect himself in his own calling, using our own special calling and its circumstances to promote that love which is the true and essential perfection of Christianity, without which all else is naught. We can only attain our great end, God's glory, through charity. Put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. It is the bond which binds us to God, our sole Perfection, and the bond which knits all graces together, and unites them to their true Source, God and His glory. It may be asked, does not God sometimes lead souls to a perfection altogether beyond that of their obvious calling? God never calls any one to a perfection contrary to his state of life, so as to hinder its duties. He never calls the layman to meddle with the priestly office of direction, or the devout woman to take upon herself to direct the consciences of others. He never inspires the wife with the desire to forsake her family duties in order to give herself up to the delights of religious exercises, or the hermit to rush into the world out of sudden zeal. He whose calling binds him to active works of charity is not led to forsake them for contemplation by the Holy Spirit. God does everything in order, and such efforts after perfection to which we are not called are perilous to the soul.

Know we not that he who intermits
The appointed task and duties of the day,
Untunes full oft the pleasure of the day;
Checking the finer spirits that refuse
To flow, when purposes are lightly changed?

Thirteenth Friday after Trinity.

Shew me Thy ways, O Lord ; teach me Thy paths. PSALM
xxv. 4.

GOD would have thee serve Him after His fashion, not after thine own. God often inspires the longing for a higher perfection than that to which a man was first called. One living in the world will be drawn to devote himself to God in poverty, chastity, and obedience ; another, despite his busy life of servile tasks, will be drawn to the highest contemplation, and some will be led to practise greater austerities in the world than those of ascetic solitaries. God has often called His chosen ones from amid the lowliest states of life and the most uneducated minds. Do not be surprised, therefore, if God leads a soul beyond its own apparent calling. He therein manifests His universal empire, and displays His mighty designs for that soul : He sets forth the triumph of His grace, outstepping all our ideas, and using what seem to us unlikely instruments for His own glory.

Whatever thing is done, by Him is done,
Ne any may His mighty will withstand ;
Ne any may His sovereign power shun ;
Ne loose that He hath bound with steadfast band ;
In vain therefore dost thou now take in hand
To call to count, or weigh He works anew,
Whose counsel's depth thou canst not understand,
Sith of things subject to thy daily view
Thou dost not know the causes nor their courses due.

For take thy balance, if thou be so wise,
And weigh the wind that under heaven doth blow ;
Or weigh the light that in the east doth rise ;
Or weigh the thought that from man's mind doth flow :
But if the weight of these thou canst not show,
Weigh but one word which from thy lips doth fall,
For how canst thou those greater secrets know,
That dost not know the least thing of them all ?
Ill can he rule the great that cannot reach the small.

Thirteenth Saturday after Trinity.

Lead me, O Lord, in Thy righteousness. PSALM v. 8.

LET us remember that good works are better in proportion as there is less of self in them. "I," "me," and "mine" are wont to corrupt half that we do; they are like a foul cobweb clinging to a beehive and spoiling all the honey. We must work zealously, as though everything depended on our own exertions, and yet the while wait wholly upon God for all results. He would have us do all that lies in our power to attain perfection and union with Himself, and having so done faithfully, our part is to wait peacefully and trustfully for Him to fulfil His perfect work. Men's natural impatience leads them to overlook this great mystery of the spiritual life, *i.e.* that those who would find God must wait long for Him. Men are not so impatient in the things of this world; they are content to toil and wait, to begin over and over again. Nothing but a patient firm waiting can win anew the victory.

'Tis thus we gain by losing,
And win by failure here;
We doff the gleaming tinsel,
The golden crown to wear.

'Tis by defeat we conquer,
Grow rich by growing poor;
And from our largest givings
We draw our fullest store.

Then let the blossoms perish,
And let the fragrance go;
All the surer and the larger
Is the harvest we shall know.

All the sweeter and the louder
Our song of harvest-home,
When earth's ripe autumn smileth,
And the reaping-day has come.

Fourteenth Sunday after Trinity.

Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.
GALATIANS v. 16.

IT is an awful lesson which God would impress on us to-day, speaking to us as it were from the two horns of His holy altar. For the Gospel is of ten lepers being healed, and one only being thankful; and the Epistle bringing before us that test, viz. whether we walk in the Spirit or after the flesh. Religion, in its full proportion, is the source of all virtue. It possesses and animates the entire man. In the understanding it is knowledge; in the life it is obedience; in the affections it is charity; in our conversation it is modesty, calmness, gentleness, quietness, candour; in our secular concerns it is uprightness, integrity, generosity. It is the regulation of our desires, the government of our passions, the harmonious union of whatsoever things are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report, virtuous and praiseworthy. A partaking of the Divine nature, a conforming to the image of God's Son; a putting on of the Lord Jesus Christ, or, in the expressive language of the Apostle, it is Christ formed within us and our abiding in the Spirit. The best mode of avoiding sins of the flesh is by being actively engaged in the life of the Spirit. "This," S. Chrysostom says, "makes duty easy, produces love, and by love is fenced in."

Art thou faithful? wake and watch,
Love with all thy heart Christ's ways,
Seek not transient ease to snatch,
Look not for reward or praise.

Art thou faithful? stand apart
From all worldly hope and pleasure;
Yonder fix thy hopes and heart,
On the heaven where lies our treasure.

Fourteenth Monday after Trinity.

For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh. GALATIANS v. 17.

By the flesh S. Paul means “not the natural body, but the depraved will.” Our corrupt nature is in its desires opposed to the Spirit of God, so there must be a conflict between them. The flesh disobeys the spirit; its appetites and motions forestall the will; the will is ready first to consent, then to excite and to enslave itself to them. Mortification of the spirit brings the flesh into subjection more efficaciously than any bodily austerity; and the reason of this is evident. The rebellion of the flesh against the spirit is the consequence and the punishment of the rebellion of the spirit against God. Therefore, when we bend all our strength to subject our spirit to God, we attack the principle of the disordered state of the flesh; and God, when He sees that the spirit is subject to Him, remits the penalty due to its pride and reduces the flesh to a state of duty. The more humble we are, the less we shall be exposed to the rebellion of the flesh.

Thy helplessness to know
Is thy best wisdom here below,
Yea, this to know is to be wise
In heaven-revealed mysteries,
This is the wisdom of the skies.

From day to day on every side
Are we by new temptations tried,
Like serpents which around us creep,
While we seem bound in powerless sleep.
To know ourselves is to confess
Our own unaided helplessness,
A child's true wisdom more and more
Learn by thy falls—a spirit poor—
The wisdom of its infant cries,
Which on a parent's hand relies.

Fourteenth Tuesday after Trinity.

But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.
GALATIANS v. 18.

IF ye are following His Divine guidance, so as to obtain this mastery over the natural mind, ye have no more need of the law. "For," says S. Chrysostom, "he that hath the Spirit as he ought, quenches thereby every evil desire, and when released from such he is above the law. For he who is never angry is no more subject to that command of the law, Thou shalt not kill; and he who never harbours an unchaste thought has no need of the law, Thou shalt not commit adultery. The grace which is now given has no need of the law, inasmuch as it mortifies all those evil desires in the heart, and leads to a higher rule of life." Thanks be to Jesus, there is nothing on earth more worthy of veneration, more mysteriously holy than the Christian, yet men often fail to perceive the dignity committed to them as temples of the Holy Ghost. In our churches the Holy Sacrifice is not indiscriminately offered, but only on the altar, and the altar is the centre point which sanctifies the whole building. Even so God vouchsafes to dwell in our hearts, and thence to issue forth the sanctifying grace which purifies our will and controls our whole outward bearing.

The clear soul, by virtue purified,
Collecting her own strength, from the foul stream
Of earthly life, is often dignified
With that pure pleasure that from God doth stream;
Often enlightened by the radiant beam
That issues forth from His Divinity;
Then feelingly immortal she doth deem
Herself conjoined by so near unity
With God, and nothing doubts of her eternity.

Fourteenth Wednesday after Trinity. (Ember Day.)

The works of the flesh are manifest. GALATIANS v. 19.

“BE not deceived.” “The works of the flesh, which are these ; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like : of the which I tell you before”—I solemnly warn you—“that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.” Sons of God, and inheritors of the kingdom, you must so live in the Spirit and walk in the Spirit as not to be tempted by these desires ; you must not creep and crawl on the ground as heirs of death, and children of the serpent ; but your walk, your hearts, your desires, must be above the world, governed by the grace of God. Thou who sayest thou abidest in Christ, ought so to walk as He walked. Thou hast given thy tongue to Christ, give not thy soul to the devil. Even a right faith, if it work not by love, maketh not men upright. Nor can works, although right, make the heart upright without faith. If then neither faith without works, nor works without faith, suffice to make the heart upright, let us who believe in Christ labour to make our ways and our deeds upright. Let us lift up our hearts with our hands unto God, that we may be formed wholly upright, proving by right deeds the rightness of our faith, loving and loved by the Bridegroom of the Church, Jesus Christ our Lord, God blessed for evermore.

Faith, hope, and charity—Father, these three

Sweet graces give to me.

Faith, to believe myself in Christ forgiven,

In Him a hope of heaven.

O ! give me charity, my heart to bind

In love to all mankind ;

So let me live, that I in Thee may die,

With Thee to reign on high.

Fourteenth Thursday after Trinity.

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. GALATIANS V. 22, 23.

S. PAUL calls them "fruit," not works, as produced by the labour of man and the dews of heaven. This description of Christian graces contains all the beatitudes of the Sermon on the Mount ; its duties and its blessings shed abroad in the soul ; and corresponds with the account which he gives of all those heavenly dispositions which are found in "charity, which never faileth." Through love we have grace to keep His commandments ; and through keeping His commandments He giveth increase of grace and love. "'He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them,' hath," saith a father, "in memory, and keepeth in life ; hath in words, and keepeth in works ; hath by hearing, and keepeth by doing ; hath by doing, and keepeth by persevering. 'He it is who loveth Me, and he who loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him.' He Who giveth us the love to obey Him, doth on our free obedience give us yet more love. He loveth us, so as to give us greater gifts of grace and that greater gift of love ; in love He will discover Himself more and more to the soul in a way which words cannot utter, but which the soul tastes, and which gives it a knowledge of Himself which passeth knowledge, and lights up the soul with an unearthly brightness ; and it knows that it loves, and loving, knows that it is beloved ; and grows in care and zeal and watchful diligence to please God Who loves it."

How little have I known Thee,
Still less have served and loved !

Teach me true service here,
The service of true love and fear.

Fourteenth Friday after Trinity.

(Ember Day.)

And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. GALATIANS v. 24.

THAT there be no room for self-deceit S. Paul sums up the character of the Christian in this touching sentence. He does not say *will* crucify, or would, or desire to do so, but "have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts." Speaking for himself on this subject he breaks forth into a sound of triumph, as one in battle who had seen his enemies turn their back: "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us." What an alarming subject is this! A conflict and struggle between the Spirit of God within us and our natural mind, which struggle many never think of making at all, but live according to the desires of the mind, as if there were no war to be waged with ourselves. But more than this, for he describes the only way of salvation to be that of being victorious in this struggle. The works of the fleshly mind and of the Spirit are so utterly at variance there can be no compromise; but the Christian who is in the narrow way of life, is led by the Spirit so as not to fulfil the desires of the natural mind. He is not in the struggle or conflict, but having through the Spirit gained the mastery over his corruptions, he is in the way of peace. He is full of "love, joy, and peace," and is therefore abounding in the fruits of righteousness.

All unseen the Master walketh
By the toiling servant's side;
Comfortable words He speaketh,
While His Hands uphold and guide.

Fourteenth Saturday after Trinity.

(Ember Day.)

Forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. PHILIPPIANS iii. 13, 14.

ALL is not accomplished when we have entered upon the ways of God ; we must walk in them, and go ever onward. A refusal to advance is a consent to fall back, for it is impossible to stand still. God Himself sets us in the path of the inner life, regulates our speed, and causes some to advance more rapidly and others more slowly. Our part is in no wise to oppose His urging Hand or to retard our progress. This progress is retarded or wholly stopped in many ways and by various causes. It is retarded by cowardice, down-heartedness, faithlessness, inconstancy, and many venial sins which show themselves in those who are not duly watchful. Progress is altogether arrested by those who act like a traveller who, instead of looking straight on, allows himself to be attracted by the objects that appear right and left, and stands still to look at them. The proof of our being pilgrims is our longing for the heavenly country. The true and eternal happiness of Christians is not here. He that seeks happiness in the world will not have it in heaven. Our country is Paradise. Let us therefore lead such a life in this pilgrimage, that as long as we are here we may be able to long for such a country, longing and praying that after we have in the arena of this world fought with the devil, we may with triumph and exultation be received as conquerors in that country of Paradise.

Lord Jesu, King of Paradise,
O keep me in Thy love,
And guide me to that happy land
Of perfect rest above ;
Where loyal hearts and true
Stand ever in the light,
All rapture through and through,
In God's most holy sight.

Fifteenth Sunday after Trinity.

No man can serve two masters: ye cannot serve God and Mammon. S. MATTHEW VI. 24.

It is impossible at the same time to love two things opposite to each other; to love the ease and honour of the world and the self-denial and humility which is found in the Cross of Christ. You must serve the Lord in and through your worldly calling; you must make your worldly calling subservient to the love of God and His service, or else they are sinful; they prevent you from loving God and cleaving to Him. Remember that One is the Spirit of grace, though manifold His gifts, manifold the things in us which, unless His Divine glow absorb them, will exclude Himself. Uncreated "Wisdom," says the wise man, "will not dwell in the body that is subject unto sin." Spiritual sins may be even in more direct antagonism to the Holy Spirit than grosser offences. For the sins of this poor flesh of ours may be sins of weakness. Spiritual sins are sins of defiance of the human spirit against the Divine. "He errs whoso thinks that he can know the truth while he yet lives wickedly; but it is wickedness to love this world and account highly of the things which come into being and pass away, to covet them and labour to gain them, to be glad when they abound, to fear lest they perish, and when they perish to be saddened. Such a life cannot see that pure, undefiled, and unchangeable Good, and cleave to it, and never be moved."

Here on earth ye can but clasp
Things that perish in the grasp;
While ye may
Lift your faces to the skies,
Come away.

Fifteenth Monday after Trinity.

Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? S. MATTHEW vi. 25.

MEN smile at the ignorance of savages who gave their gold in exchange for baubles of glass. They were philosophers compared to those who barter eternity for time. Evil is never so deadly as when it puts on an air of respectability. The worldliness which we have most to fear is a negative worldliness, a worldliness without great sins because it has not great temptations; a quiet unobtrusive worldliness, a worldliness which is the more hopeless because it substitutes self for God so universally, yet so imperceptibly, that the soul, like Samson, does not know that God is departed from it, that it is living without Him. Jesus says to each one of us, "I have chosen you out of the world." Chosen me, Lord! for what? "For Myself and for My love." This world of ours, sanctified by and all glistening with the precious Blood of Christ, is a happy world if God be our end. Then everything takes new hues of joy and love. Our daily comforts have a soul in them, for they abound in thanksgiving; our daily crosses have a special joy in them, because they are so tenderly fitted to us by the medicinal Hand of our God; the commonest acts of life are full of deep interest, because their end is God; daily duties are daily joys, because they are something which God gives us to offer unto Him, to do to our very best in acknowledgment of His love.

Then happy thou in all thy life,
What so to thee befalls,
Yea, double happy shalt thou be
When God by death thee calls.

Fifteenth Tuesday after Trinity.

If God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall He not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith ? S. MATTHEW vi. 30.

JESUS says to each of us: "O ye of little faith, oh why will ye not trust in Me? It is all I ask in return for My love. Recline yourselves on Me; in My Bosom ye shall find peace for all your cares. I have left the riches and glories of heaven; I have emptied Myself of all My greatness, and become poorer than any of you, in order that ye may trust Me, and that trusting in Me, all which I have may be yours." Personal trust in Jesus can never fail, for He Who gave it upholds it. Only faith cannot endure without love, nor can love endure in total unlikeness. In vain do we think that we love God if we obey Him not. How can we think that we love Him if we do not trust Him, and if our will is at variance with His, if our affections are far from Him, our ways contradictory? Perfect trust and perfect love have no disharmony of will. God give us grace so to lay to heart our ways that we may weary of all which is not His—from Him, to Him, and through Him.

Not what I am, O Lord, but what Thou art !
That, that alone can be my soul's true rest.
Thy love, not mine, bids fear and doubt depart,
And stills the tempest of my tossing breast.

Girt with the love of God on every side,
Breathing that love as heaven's own healing air,
I work or wait, still following my Guide,
Braving each foe, escaping every snare.

Fifteenth Wednesday after Trinity.

Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. S. MATTHEW vi. 32.

WHAT affection! your heavenly Father knoweth every want. It is not the pressure of want that fills men with faithless cares, but the *fear* of it; it is not the need of to-day, but of the future. Take therefore no thought for the morrow, every day brings troubles of its own, which it will be enough to bear with meekness and patience; every day brings sins and temptations against which it will require our whole undivided care and attention to contend with. Ye have need of all this to fit you for your home above, that ye may work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is He that "worketh in you both to will and to do." "Henceforth let no man trouble me," says S. Paul, "for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus." Take up individually the Apostle's stand. His mark I bear, His brand has gone deep into my flesh; I am His. With His Cross was I signed at my baptism in token that I should be for ever His alone; that His Cross should be my study, my pattern, my peace. Jesus is yours, your very own, your inheritance. You have the right to offer His Blood to His Father, His sufferings, His merits; to offer them as your own, and in like manner you have a right to offer His love, His adoration, His humility, His patience, as the fruits of the Vine whereof you are the branch.

Lord, let me cast all thought of care
For worldly things on Thee;
Thankful that Thou such weight wilt bear
For one who has small time to spare
For aught but holy strife and prayer,
Thine evermore to be.

Fifteenth Thursday after Trinity.

Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in Me: . . . for without Me ye can do nothing. S. JOHN xv. 4, 5.

THIS I want you to feel more and more every hour of the day, because it is the necessary ladder to that other saying, "I can do all things." It is not thou who art to overcome the world, within thee or without thee, but thy faith, which is the gift of God, and the power of Christ within thee. The strong man will not give way to *thee*, but he will give way to the power of Christ within. Thou mayest not see thy progress, nor for a while, perhaps, may others see it; strive on in humility, strive on as for thy life, and pray God that thou mayest strive on to the end and thou canst not fail. It is not thyself, although it is not *without* thyself, God wills that thou gather up thyself into one, wholly to depend upon Him, wholly to trust Him, wholly to believe Him. Human things are gained by human energy, Divine things by Divine. Look not to thy fears within thee, go forth out of thyself, go to Jesus, then

Be of good cheer; your cause belongs
To Him Who can avenge your wrongs,
Leave it to Him, our Lord.
Though hidden yet from all our eyes,
He sees the Gideon who shall rise
To save us, and His word.

As true as God's own word is true,
Nor earth nor hell with all their crew
Against us shall prevail.
A jest and byword are they grown;
God is with us, we are His own:
Our victory cannot fail.

Fifteenth Friday after Trinity.

This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.
I S. JOHN v. 4.

VICTORY over temptation is the witness of heavenly birth. Living and victorious faith is that whereby Christ dwelleth in our hearts. Christ will not dwell in our hearts if we fill our hearts with things which He hates. Is there no victory, nor real faith, when the world holds a struggle with us, sometimes overcoming us, sometimes overcome? In some things victory should be complete at once. Sins of infirmity there may be; sins against light there should not be. To do wilfully and knowingly what God hates, destroys faith and hope and love. But so that thou art fighting against thy besetting sin, if thou art conquering thyself, thou art still Christ's soldier, even though in thought, word, or deed thou be from time to time in lesser things surprised. God has so willed that everything, even victory over ourselves, should be gained step by step. God alone works things at once. It belongs to His almightiness. He created us in a moment; He giveth us in a moment, through His sacrament, the first spark and principle of life; He willeth that we should through our whole lives guard, cherish, enlarge that first gift, and receive it more fully. He willeth that through our very slowness and failures we should learn and keep humility. God places in baptism a principle of life within us, which, if we allow it to work as we grow on, will penetrate our whole souls, transform this heavy mass of our earthliness into its own Divine nature.

'Tis done; that new and heavenly birth
Which re-creates the sons of earth,
And cleanses from the guilt of sin
The souls whom Jesus died to win.

Fifteenth Saturday after Trinity.

If ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. ROMANS viii. 13.

THE Divine inworking is the ground of our working. It is because God "inworketh" that man "worketh out" his salvation, and that with awe, "with fear and trembling," lest he miss that for which God so largely endows him. The power is of God; the last act is man's, as enabled by God. There has then been a subtle Pelagianism in that fear of speaking of the value which God gives to the works of man, wrought by His own grace in man. The dread to own them implies a lurking suspicion that they are, after all, man's own works. For the fear is, not lest a man should exalt himself that he is a chosen vessel of the grace of God, but lest it were impossible to own that God looks graciously on the works which He gives power to do, that no work done by His grace, in other words, no use of His grace is too poor to escape His Eye of love. The very poorest deed of self-denial, or love, or faithfulness in our condition of life, done by the grace of God to His glory, is laid up by Him, and increases the store of our everlasting reward. The fear is, lest we should not be able to believe this large bounty of our God, and yet to remember that all *is* of His bounty.

Great High Priest, Who deignedst to be
Once the Sacrifice for me,
Take this living heart of mine,
Lay it on Thy holy shrine.

Love I know accepteth nought,
Save what Thou, O Love, hath wrought;
Offer Thou my sacrifice,
Else to God it cannot rise.

Sixteenth Sunday after Trinity.

I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you, which is your glory. EPHESIANS iii. 13.

S. PAUL's sufferings were a proof of his sincerity, a confirmation of the truth of the doctrine he preached. The Ephesians might well think it an honour done to them, as well as an indispensable engagement to continue firm in their faith. To S. Paul his tribulations were light, his fear was that his sufferings might be to others a cause of offence, like the Cross of Christ itself was. But as the Cross of Christ was become the glory of the believer, so also might be the sufferings of His servants who drank of their Master's cup. What you have to do with is the being His entirely, is the counting all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus your Lord. Let every trouble, every pain, be a golden chain to lead you, and, through you, others to your Lord. Look calmly on to the vista of years which it may be God's will you should pass on earth, and say, "Bright or gloomy, it matters very little; they are His, not mine. If the shadows lie heavily on them, they will be His shadows; if the sun beam brightly over them, it will be His sun. I am not careful to know what He has appointed, so only I may be sure of His love."

Cling to the Crucified!
His is a heart of love
Full as the hearts above;
Its depths of sympathy
Are all awake for thee;
His Countenance is light,
Even in the darkest night.
That love shall never change,
That light shall ne'er grow dim;
Charge thou thy faithless heart
To find its all in Him.
Cling to the Crucified!

Sixteenth Monday after Trinity.

For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of Whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named. EPHESIANS iii. 14, 15.

THE Angels in heaven and the Saints on earth are all the sons of God, making the same family, the one universal Church of Christ. They are all one, yet how many Patriarchs, Prophets, and Apostles, Martyrs, Saints are there. They are for ever with the Lord. "They see Him as He is," and though we be on earth, yet if our conversation be in heaven, we must join with them in their worship. Praise our God, all ye His servants, ye that fear Him both small and great. None of us can be too small to fear Him; none, be they even babes, can be too insignificant to join in praise with the Church. The Saints in heaven see Him as He is, for they are made by Him meet to partake of His glory. We see Him not as He is, but as He once became for us; for such a sight is most needful for us, that in His humiliation we may be humble, in His sorrows we may grieve, beholding what He hath become for our sakes and for our sins. "Not to all His members," says a father, "doth He appear alike; for to some it is as the Head rough with thorns, bowed down on the Cross, that they together with Him might be abased. To others He appears glorious, that they in Him may be glorious. He that would be His where He wears His crown of glory, must be His also where He wears His crown of thorns.

And now, my soul, canst thou forget
That thy whole life is one long debt
Of love to Him Who on this tree
The flesh paid back He took for thee?

Sixteenth Tuesday after Trinity.

His own elect. S. LUKE xviii. 7.

WE pray in the Burial Service that it may please God “shortly to accomplish the number of His elect.” This expression “the number of His elect” is found in the 7th chapter of Revelation, and what an awful description, and at the same time so exceedingly beautiful and sublime that one fears to lower or limit it by any human explanation. It is a subject rather for devout meditation and prayer. For even unto us has come the Messenger of the covenant, ascending from the east as the rising Sun with healing on His wings; we have been sealed on the forehead with the seal of the living God, the Cross of Christ signed on our foreheads at our Baptism; and our souls have been sealed with the anointing of the Holy One, but as then they were “not all Israel that were of Israel.” Oh that we may find this our calling and election of God in heaven! That we may be of that predestined number known of God, when all shall be found to be in exact fulness, completion, and perfection, however indefinite and uncertain things may now appear. For such is represented in the exactness of the number 144. The Christian Church, though it be so broken and divided, yet it shall fulfil those ends which God hath ordained for the gathering in of His elect. Though hidden from the world, they are known unto Him.

Wash me, and dry these bitter tears,
O let my heart no further roam!
’Tis Thine by vows, and hopes, and fears,
Long since. O call Thy wanderer home!
To that dear home, safe in Thy wounded Side,
Where only broken hearts their sin and shame may hide.

Sixteenth Wednesday after Trinity.

Strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man.
EPHESIANS iii. 16.

“O GOD, Who dost wondrously refresh Thy Church with Thy precious Body and Blood, pour upon her Thy quickening Spirit: that by partaking of the heavenly Mystery while she lives on Thee upon earth, she may attain to live with Thee in heaven.” Faint not, God will strengthen thee. If thou prayest, Angels shall waft thy prayer in their golden censers, and thine Almighty Intercessor shall present it before His Father; and unseen, perhaps unfelt, the Holy Spirit shall descend upon thee, and thou shalt, day by day, be renewed not by any power over thine own thoughts, nor by any change of thine own feelings wrought by thyself, but by His might. At Holy Communion pray Him, when He vouchsafeth to come under thy roof, in that deep prayer of the Church, to cleanse thy sinful body by His Body and wash thy soul in His precious Blood; and He shall dwell in thee and thou in Him, thy impurity cleansed by His purity, thy lukewarmness kindled by His love, thy pride changed into His lowliness, that in the clean heart which He has created He may dwell, and with the right spirit which He has renewed thou mayest love and obey and be conformed unto Him, and thy everlasting joy be that thou art wholly not thine own, but His; one spirit with Him, through His Spirit which dwelleth in thee.

O Holy Ghost ! Thou fire of love,
Enkindle with Thy flame my will;
Come with Thy strength, Lord, from above,
Help me Thy bidding to fulfil;
Forgive that I so oft have done
What I as sinful ought to shun;
Let me with pure and quenchless fire
Thy favour and Thyself desire.

Sixteenth Thursday after Trinity.

That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith. EPHESIANS
iii. 17.

THE fellow-disciples of S. Thomas told him, "We have seen the Lord." He said, "Except I shall touch, except I shall put my finger into His Side, I will not believe;" and he actually did put his hand there and made his faith complete. For what is the fulness of faith? That Christ should not be believed merely as Man; that Christ should not be believed simply as God; but as Man and God. This is the fulness of faith; for the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us. Therefore S. Thomas, when the scars and limbs of his Saviour were presented to his touch, when he touched exclaimed, "My Lord and my God." He touched the Man—he recognised the God; He touched the Flesh—he thought of the Word. Every day, throughout the universal Church, Peter is saying, "Thou art Christ the Son of God," and every tongue which owns the Lord is instructed by the teaching of this voice. This faith overcomes the devil and breaks the chain of his captives, rescues men from the world and introduces them into heaven, and the gates of hell cannot prevail against it. Let us bear in mind that

Blessed are they who, needing no loud sign
Of reason, or felt proof, or voice Divine,
Believing, love; and loving, ask not sight!
They on the Bosom of the Infinite
Have been, and there in faith for ever lie;
Believing because they love, and ask not why,
But on His Bosom lie they all day long,

. . . And are refreshed and strong.
Through all Thy works, Thee, Lord, at every turn,
Through all Thy Word, Thee and Thy Cross discern.

Sixteenth Friday after Trinity.

That ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all Saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height ; and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.
EPHESIANS iii. 17-19.

THE ever-constant leaning on forgiving love is perpetuated, and "as we seek, we find ; as we ask, we receive ; as we knock, it is opened to us." Love sealed by the Blood of Sacrifice, love breathing its unceasing intercession before the throne, ever flows on, as waves of light in the luminous atmosphere surrounding us radiate unceasingly from the unchanging impulses of the central light, and we see only as these waves, in the infinite succession of their ceaseless pulsations, strike our organs of sight. So only as the continual forgiving of God for the love of Christ reaches and passes into us in its continuous, endless energies of forgiving and cleansing grace, which knows no pause in its fulness of compassion, do we live on in peace as His children, members of Himself. This tenderness, as it pervades the soul, becomes in itself a character of beauty, enters into every feature of life ; giving it a sweetness and winningness, a new power of thoughtfulness and repose, a depth of pathos most lovable, most religious. That most beautiful feature in the character of Christ, which arises from His intense perception of the misery of sin and His own loving sorrow over it, can be at all imitated by us only as we learn to live in the consciousness of our own sin, and of the power of His love and His pity in healing us.

To all He showed that gentle Face ;
On good and bad alike it shone ;
Its perfect loveliness and grace
The Lord of all concealed from none.

Sixteenth Saturday after Trinity.

Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto Him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen. EPHESIANS iii. 20, 21.

O how boundless the thought of this individual love of God! He loves each with an individual love. The human heart craves for an undivided love. This is what God gives us. All the spiritual gifts which God gives us are indivisibly ours. He gives objectively the same gifts because He has nothing better which He could give us. He gives them us in common as members of the Body of Christ to bind us the more to one another; what He gives to all, He gives indivisibly to each. The indwelling of God the Holy Ghost and the participation of Christ are the unity of the whole Body of Christ, the Church. Singly you were made in Baptism a member of Christ; singly, in the Holy Eucharist, by that miracle of His love, you "eat the Flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His Blood; you dwell in Christ, and Christ in you; are one with Christ, and Christ with you." You have that whole indivisible love of Christ. God loves with the whole power of His Infinite love all who do not finally shut out His love; He loves thee with His whole Being. *Now* in this life is the time of growth in the capacity for receiving that boundless love of God. Not a prayer, not an act of faithfulness in your calling, not a self-denying act or kind deed done out of love for Him, not a temptation resisted, but it enlarges the soul for the endless capacity of the love of God, and of God, till

We, with all the choir above,
May sing Thy power and praise Thy love.

Seventeenth Sunday after Trinity.

Walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness. EPHESIANS iv. 1, 2.

"HE hath put down the mighty from their seats, and hath exalted the humble and meek. He hath filled the hungry with good things ; and the rich He hath sent empty away." He was the mightiest of the mighty. He put Himself down from His seat in heaven, and because of this His surpassing humility and meekness God exalted Him. True peace is only to be found by patient abiding in that condition wherein God has placed us. In spiritual as in temporal things our chief aim should be to abide where God has placed us, all our misfortunes arising because we stray from this Divine will ; and if so, it follows that the sickness, or loss, or temptation, or spiritual dryness which often trouble you, is precisely the condition in which God wills you to be, that wherein your safety lies. If, then, you are sick, strive to accept sickness as better for you than health ; if despised, welcome contempt as more profitable than any possible praise of men. If you feel as though God were absent from you, accept the exile as better for you than the glow of His conscious presence. Be like a little child who cannot walk, and so remains tranquilly where his mother places him, certain that she will not leave him uncared for. Look upon your present condition as a cross to which God Himself has nailed you. He who heartily makes this his rule is content. All his happiness lies in God's will, and with the eye of faith he sees his Father's Hand in everything.

Like Thy blest self, Lord, teach me to submit
To all my heavenly Father shall think fit ;
To yield the full subjection of a son,
Pray, " Father, not my will, but Thine be done."

Seventeenth Monday after Trinity.

With longsuffering, forbearing one another in love. EPHE-
SIANS iv. 2.

THE overlooking of our neighbours' faults is a fundamental rule of charity. This is a great art, most necessary in society, most conducive to the pleasantness of life. How much easier it is to suit oneself to others than to bend them to our opinions and humours! The human mind is a mirror which readily reflects every colour presented to it, only we must beware not to be like theameleon, which reflects every tint save white. Toleration without purity and candour is dangerous. We do well to take pity on sinners, but rather with a view to drag them out of their ditch than to let them perish in it through mistaken tenderness. It is a perverse compassion which looks on without venturing to help a neighbour from out of the peril of sin, by reaching forth a hand in the shape of a kind but honest remonstrance. One should forbear in all things short of offending God. This is the limit of all true forbearance. I do not say that one ought to rebuke a sinner under all circumstances. Discreet charity waits for a suitable opportunity to apply the required remedy. Impetuous zeal without wisdom does more harm than good. Some people do nothing because they aim at doing too much, and rend asunder that which they seek to unite. One must make haste slowly, one must be judicious in reproof as in forbearance. Be patient and forbearing, but when you make up your mind to reprove, use such wisdom and decision, such vigour and gentleness, that none can resist you.

Help us, O Lord ! with patient love to bear
Each other's faults, to suffer with true meekness ;
Help us each other's joys and griefs to share,
But let us turn to Thee alone in weakness.

Seventeenth Tuesday after Trinity.

Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. EPHESIANS iv. 3.

THE Apostles by fiery tongues, which they saw, were admonished when the Spirit, which they could not behold, was upon them. In like manner it is with us. Christ and His Holy Spirit, with all their blessed effects, though entering into the soul of man, we are not able to apprehend or express how, do notwithstanding give notice of the times when they use to make their access, because it pleaseth Almighty God to communicate by sensible means those blessings which are incomprehensible—the union between Christ and His Church. Our blessed Lord prays for this union “that they may be one as We are One.” As the whole body and all its members are held together by one soul, the spirit of life, so it is with the Church of God. There is one body and one Spirit, the Spirit which quickens that body, or else it would be more bodies than one. This sanctifying Spirit is the free gift of God coming and going when He wills. His effect is known by its fruits, but He comes and goes unseen; He comes to those who wait for Him in brotherly love “with one accord;” He reveals to the heart the mysteries of heaven.

O Holy Ghost ! Thou fire Divine !
From highest heaven on us down shine ;
Comforter, be Thy comfort mine !

Thy will be ours in all our ways ;
O melt the frozen with Thy rays ;
Call home the lost in error's maze,
And grant us, Lord, who cry to Thee,
And hold the faith in unity,
Thy precious gifts of charity,
That we may live in holiness,
And find in death our happiness,
And dwell with Thee in lasting bliss.

Seventeenth Wednesday after Trinity.

There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling. EPHESIANS iv. 4.

ONE is the Spirit of God, and in His love He willeth to envelop you wholly; He willeth day by day to prepare you wholly for that angel-life for which He created you. He willeth to enlighten your minds with His light; to kindle your hearts with His fire of love, your souls to "possess with His full flood of holiness;" to "sanctify you wholly," that "your whole spirit and soul and body may be preserved blameless, to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." Hold not back from Him part of the price of your Saviour's Blood. Divide not the mansion of your soul between God and the world. Narrow as we make our poor souls, each is not too narrow to contain God. It is too narrow to contain the world and God. It can contain Him Who containeth all things; but it cannot contain Him and wilfully retain any mind other than His, or exclude anything which is His, or of Him. If you can trust His love Who is the Uncreated Love of the Father and the Son, if you can trust His Light Who came to enlighten the regenerators of the world, if you can trust His faithfulness in Whom ye were "sealed to the day of redemption," yield yourselves to Him the Source of life, that by His gift partaking of His holiness, you may have even here the earnest and foretaste of His everlasting bliss.

What joys Thou dost to them impart
Who serve Thee, Lord, with steadfast heart !
They seek for Thee the cave unblest;
Thou hid'st them in Thy fostering Breast.

Seventeenth Thursday after Trinity.

One Lord, one faith. EPHESIANS iv. 5.

THIS is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. This is the victory by which the Martyrs overcame, and in Divine strength mastered the strong; the strength of endurance wearied out the brutal might of infliction. Fishermen and the tent-maker subdued the world; the blood of Martyrs became the harvest seed of the Church. By this same faith "they subdued kingdoms." For faith knits us to Christ. Faith obtains for us the power of Christ, and overcomes the world, for it has power with Him Who has power over the world. Faith binds us to Him Who is almighty. Faith opens our eyes to things invisible. It imparts to us also the power of the All-Powerful and the wisdom of the All-Wise. To overcome the world; to love God and keep His commandments; to have the witness in ourselves that we are born of God; to "have the Son," abiding in Him through faith and love and obedience, because He abides in us through His Spirit and His Sacraments; to have already eternal life, since we have Him Who is life;—these are joys to us all. This is living faith. Obedience is the fruit of faith, the proof of love; it grows from faith and love, and draws in life and strength and the quickening dew of God's grace, to enlarge and expand the stock on which it grows.

We Thee confess in Thine own light,
In blessedness most infinite.
Faith, kindling into charity,
Hath dared to raise her thoughts to Thee,
And tastes of what herself shall be.
Father, give us to do what Thou
Wouldst have done;
What Thou dost teach give us to know,
Holy Son;
And to approve what Thou dost love,
Holy One.

Sebenteenth Friday after Trinity.

One Lord, one baptism. EPHESIANS iv. 5.

INTO the Eternal, Equal, Infinite Love of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost we are, in our degree, entered. "All things are full," say the ancient fathers of the Church, "as from Him Who is fulness, and perfect as from perfection." "He unites us with Himself and the Father, not in one created, but in the Holy Spirit. "What says the Lord? 'Baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.' How into the Name of the Father? Because He is the Beginning of all things. How into the Name of the Son? Because He is the Redeemer. How into the Holy Ghost? Because He perfecteth all things." "Keep, I beseech thee," says S. Paul, "that good deposit for which I live and act; wherewith also I bear all sorrows, despise all pleasures, the confession of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost. With this I intrust thee this day. This I give thee as the presider over thy whole life, the One Godhead, existing in unity in the Three, comprehending the Three severally; every way equal, as there is one beauty and greatness of the heavens." This union was begun in us when baptized into the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. This union is increased whenever we pray to God. It is increased in us in the Holy Communion; for "we spiritually eat the Flesh of Christ, and drink His Blood; we dwell in Christ, and Christ in us; we are one with Christ, and Christ with us."

All worship, all dominion,
To Him Who all things holds in one,
The Triune God Unseen!

Sebenteenth Saturday after Trinity.

One God and Father of all, Who is above all, and through all, and in you all. EPHESIANS iv. 6.

GOD reveals Himself in two ways to man, within and without. Each of these voices of God is made more distinct as man is brought nearer to God. Without, together with God's voice in nature whereby He still speaks, when we forget His voice of grace, He hath given us "the writings of the law, the oracles of Prophets, the melody of the Psalms, the instruction of Proverbs, the experience of histories," the words of the Son made flesh by Himself or by His Apostles. Within, together with the voice of conscience, He speaks too by the Spirit. God speaketh ever to the heart *as* He speaketh through His Word. For He cannot contradict Himself. But He speaketh to the soul mostly through the Word of God, at times even without it. A voice which is contrary to it cannot be from Him, and so it hath ever been a rule in the Church, that were an angel from heaven to seem to bid anything really contrary to it, it must be the evil angel "transformed into an angel of light." Yet at all seasons in the Church God does speak to the conscience, often without voice of words or audible sound, by His Spirit. He guides the soul, yet so that it is a secret voice to the hidden ear of the heart which hears it. And "His sheep hear His voice" and know that it is He Who speaketh,

Shine ever in this heart of mine,
And show me clearly I am Thine,
And keep me Thine with cords of love,
Until I reach Thy courts above ;
Those courts where Angels' voices sing,
Where glory lights up everything ;
Where Thou reveal'st Thyself to sight
'Midst light itself all lost in light.

Eighteenth Sunday after Trinity.

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. S. MATTHEW xxii. 37.

THOSE who are specially dedicated to God are called to aim at a special sanctification of their lives. As temptations beset every state of life, those who have dedicated themselves to God, whether in the religious life, in holy orders, or less openly, but not less deliberately, while living in the world, are liable to imagine that such acts of dedication will of themselves lead to the desired result, and that having made them, the way of sanctification is clear, and no further efforts needed. O grievous mistake! All souls are God's, and owe Him their undivided allegiance; but those who have voluntarily renewed their self-dedication, their lives and faculties to His service, whether living in the world or apart from it, are bound to a closer, more earnest watchfulness, lest they fall from their high aim. The very fact of such a dedication involves a nearer approach to that kingdom wherein nothing impure can enter. We are His creatures, already brethren of Christ through His Incarnation, members of His mystical Body by Baptism, His friends through participation of Eucharistic Communion; but there is yet another tender title which He takes, suggesting a dearer relationship still, He calls Himself the Bridegroom of His Church. As a bride gives herself up lovingly and heartily in all obedience to her husband, so the soul that plights itself to a heavenly Bridegroom gives itself up in a total devotion, active and passive, to Christ. The simplest duties, the most transient enjoyments, ordinary work, intercourse with other men,—all will be referred to Him. If the tree be the Lord's, are not the leaves and the fruit His also?

Give Him thy first thoughts, then so shalt thou keep
Him company all day, and in Him sleep.

Eighteenth Monday after Trinity.

In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths. PROVERBS iii. 6.

AMONG breaches of earthly ties men hold those the most grievous where the bond is closest, and that which would be as nothing between strangers is unkindness between husband and wife. And so that which might be passed over in an ordinary life, becomes weighty in that of one who is plighted to a heavenly Bridegroom. "It is no longer I but Christ Who dwelleth in me." What strength this thought should give in trial, pain, and temptation! He Who dwelleth in you, He Whose you are, beareth all in and with you! Who that keeps this steadfastly in mind but will give most diligent heed lest any subtle worldly trifle sully the purity of that soul wherein Jesus deigns to dwell? It is over *little things* that you have to watch; such little things as you may scarcely be inclined to consider worth heeding or counting as faults, and which indeed would not be such in those whose calling is less special, and who are not seeking to measure themselves by so high a standard. A trifling eagerness or curiosity, or rest in some earthly delight, a little unpunctuality, or a careless exaggeration—small as these seem, they may be weighty hindrances to one to whom much having been given, of him much shall be required. Look at your whole life, daily and hourly, in that light, and you will assuredly learn to consider nothing little that can cast a shadow upon the heavenly mirror which your soul should present to your heavenly Bridegroom.

I will arise and in the strength of love
Pursue the bright track ere it fade away,
My Saviour's pathway to His home above.

Eighteenth Tuesday after Trinity.

I have created him for My glory. ISAIAH xliii. 7.

PICTURE to yourself a seraph dwelling amidst us, would you not note and marvel at shadows of imperfection in him which you would pass unnoticed even in holy men? And in like manner, in those whose vocation brings them nearer to God than other men, little specks, scarce visible in others, become blemishes and hindrances. The greater God's love for any soul, the greater is the perfection which He requires of that soul. Where love is the measure, nothing is small. Even among ourselves we are far more sensitive to a slight failing in any one we love dearly than to a much greater defect in one indifferent. Remember all that each redeemed soul has cost its Saviour; remember all He continually does for His own. What devotion would you expect from one for whom you had offered your life, upon whom you were daily showering every conceivable benefit? And how bitterly would you feel neglect and ingratitude even in little things from such a one. You must not forget that while there is this special claim upon your loving obedience in the minutest matters, you are likewise assisted to render it by the special grace which your dear Lord never fails to impart to those whom He calls to follow Him. Be sure that if you meet and correspond to that grace, you will find strength to conquer and put away all these trifles which mar your perfect obedience.

Plant, Lorde, in me the tree of godly lyfe,
Hedge me about with Thy strong fence of faith;
If thee it please, use eke Thy pruning-knife,
Lest that, O Lord! as a good gardener saith
If suckers draw the sappe from bowes on hie,
Perhaps in tyme the top of tree may die.
Let, Lord, this tree be set within Thy garden wall
Of Paradise, where growes no one ill sprig at all.

Eighteenth Wednesday after Trinity.

He Which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ. PHILIPPIANS i. 6.

To love God is verily a gift of God. He Who, when He was not loved, loved us, gave us power to love Him. When we were displeasing to Him He loved us, that there might be formed in us that whereby we might please Him. He who loveth God for Himself, loveth Him the more as he is bared of all, and nothing is left him but his God. He feareth to keep things about him which may take off his thoughts from God; he feareth nothing but what may lessen the love of God, desireth nothing but what may gain him more love; valueth no praise of man, unless it cometh from the love of God, or issueth to His glory. Love counteth all things loss so that it may win Christ. Faint not, any who would love Jesus, if you find yourselves yet far short of what He Himself Who is love saith of the love of Him. Perfect love is heaven. When ye are perfected in love, your work on earth is done.

Love can give us all things here,
Use and beauty cannot sever;
Love can raise us to that sphere
Whence the soul tends heavenward ever;
Though one speak with angel tongues
Bravest words of strength and fire,
If no love his heart inspire,
They are but as fleeting songs;
All his eloquence shall pass
As the noise of sounding brass.
Come, Thou Spirit of pure love,
Who dost forth from God proceed,
Never from my heart remove,
Let me all Thy impulse heed.

Eighteenth Thursday after Trinity.

Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. S. MATTHEW xxii. 39.

LOVE may be natural or supernatural. It is easy to graft the higher upon the lower love, and to love for God's sake those whom we already love with a natural love, but it is not so easy to love any one with a purely supernatural love. "But," you ask, "is it wrong to love one's neighbour for his own good qualities?" No, to do so is natural love. But if it is hard to love any one with a purely disinterested natural love, rather than because of the pleasure or benefit we derive from him, it is harder still so to purify our supernatural love as to love only through God and His holy will. This is a degree of love to our neighbour only attained by those who are very far advanced in the paths of holiness; and it comprises love of enemies; for it is easy enough to love those who are pleasant and useful to us, but to love people who injure or inconvenience us, solely because God would have us do so, is a supernatural love—one that is wholly in and of God. "One needs," says a good man, "a tender, kindly, loving heart towards one's neighbour, particularly when he is troublesome or offensive to one, because then we love him solely for the Saviour's sake—a love all the worthier that it is free from earthly motives." To love any one purely and solely in God is an altogether supernatural task.

O Spirit, Fount of love,
Unlock Thy temple door,
And on our spirits pour
Thy Day-spring from above.

O Thou of the great Three,
Who art the Union,
Unite us all in one,
In bonds of charity.

Eighteenth Friday after Trinity.

His commandments are not grievous. I S. JOHN v. 3.

TRUE love of man cannot be without love of God, nor true love of God without love of man. Nor can there be true love of God which does not love His commandments. Who ever loved, and loved not the will of the object of that love? How much more, when He Who is loved is the Fountain of all good, Whose will is very good, the rule, and law, and substance of all good? And "His commandments are not grievous." For nothing is grievous to him who loves. They are not grievous, because love makes them light; they are not grievous, because Christ gives strength to bear them. God's commands are no weight to the soul, which, through His Spirit, He upbears to Himself; nay, rather, the soul through them the more soars aloft and loses itself in the love of God. They are not grievous, because everything "which is born of God overcometh the world." Everything, "of every age or sex, time or clime," "which is born of God overcometh the world;" and that not of ourselves, but of the gift of God; not they, but the power through their new birth inborn in them, faith, love, grace from God unto God. And they, as wielding in them a power not their own, overcome the world, a power which would lift us above all hindrances, carry us over all temptations, the almighty power of the grace of God.

It is Thy strength alone, alone Thy strength
That strengthens me;

And for that strength of Thine that strengthens—my Strength,
I come to Thee.

Eighteenth Saturday after Trinity.

Love one another. 1 S. JOHN iv. 7.

THE love of God constrains us that we should love all, as Christ loveth them. We must bear with those whom Christ bears with as with ourselves. We must desire that all should love Him whom He willeth to love Him ; for whom with us God became man ; for whom with us Christ died ; whom with us Christ redeemed, to be partakers of His own joy and love. The holy Angels love us and minister to us, because Christ, Whom they love, loves us. How should not we, being so poor and mean ourselves, love the very poorest which Christ loves. The love of God is the fountain, the love of man the stream in which it flows. Both are parts of one whole, threads of one cord so intertwined that thou canst not have the one without the other, links of one chain which binds us to Almighty God, descending from Him to us, and lifting us up to His very Being, which is love. God gives us the love of our neighbour as the test of our love of Himself. The love of God is the soul of the love of our neighbour. But as we see not the soul, or might think it away when it is in the body, and present when it is away, so we might often deceive ourselves as to the love of God, thinking that we have it when we have it not, or have it not when we have it. But love to others goes forth into acts, involves self-denial, self-sacrifice.

Largely Thou givest, gracious Lord ;
Largely Thy gifts should be restored ;
Freely Thou givest, and Thy word
Is, " Freely give."

Nineteenth Sunday after Trinity.

Be ye angry, and sin not. EPHESIANS iv. 26.

ALTHOUGH ye be angry, which indeed may be the case without offence—for what good man is not angry at successful wickedness?—yet let your righteous indignation be without sin; and especially let no resentment ever find a lodging in your bosom. Take care that you never sleep but in meekness and peace with all the world; for Satan knows full well that God forgives you not unless you forgive, and any feeling of unkindness gives an opening to him which he will be sure to increase. It is better to deny entrance to just and reasonable anger than to admit it, be it ever so little, because being once admitted it is with difficulty driven out again; for it enters as a little twig, and in no time it grows and becomes a beam. So if anger can but once gain the night of us, if the sun go down upon our wrath, which the Apostle forbids, it turns into hatred, from which we have scarcely any means of ridding ourselves; for it nourishes itself under a thousand false pretexts, since no angry man ever thought his anger unjust. The prayer which is made against present and pressing danger must be performed calmly and quietly. As soon as you perceive that you have been guilty of an act of anger, repair the fault immediately by an act of meekness towards the same person against whom you were angry.

Seek the wisdom from above,
Pure, peaceful, gentle, fervent love;
Let love Divine thy bosom sway.

Nineteenth Monday after Trinity.

He that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not. 1 S. JOHN v. 18.

PRAY for the grace of God, and for the second grace to use it; and then use it. "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a stedfast spirit within me." A spirit (literally) firmly fixed, established, steadied; not steady in itself, but steadied by God; steadied as being firmly built on that Foundation which is Christ. We can by the grace of God keep ourselves from present grievous falls. We can by His grace withhold ourselves from words and deeds akin to our past falls and offences against God's goodness; we can keep ourselves from consenting in will to those sins. We can by His grace overcome, in the main, present temptations, fight against them through the might of Christ, be diligent in deeds of good as too many were once in evil, and wherein through human infirmity we fail, we can by that same grace quickly return. Do we what by His grace we can, and what we cannot let us pray Him to do Who can, and will, do all things for good to those who seek Him. Let every pang of misery and self-reproach issue in a brief prayer to Him, a sigh for His help, a longing for His purity, and He will create in thee a clean heart, and every cry shall bring down the touch of His Hand to cleanse it.

Lord ! who are they that thus choose Thee,
But those Thou first didst choose ?
To whom Thou gav'st Thy grace most free,
Thy grace not to refuse.

We of ourselves can nothing do,
But all on Thee depend ;
Thine is the work and wages too,
Thine both the way and end.

Nineteenth Tuesday after Trinity.

Seek meekness. ZEPHANIAH ii. 3.

THE Holy Spirit will only abide in a humble soul. There must not only be recollection to win His presence, there must be humility to retain that gracious presence. "If we live in the Spirit, we must walk in the Spirit," and that none save a humble heart can do. Think of the humility with which He vouchsafed to overshadow the blessed Virgin, so that she became the mother of God ; think of the humility of the Incarnation itself ; think of the condescension which brings Him down even now to visit our hearts and consciences. Call to mind His promises, that He will dwell with the meek and lowly of heart. It is with the contrite, humble heart that He pledges Himself to abide. It is into the deeps of humility that the deeps of spiritual grace are poured. Nothing is so damaging to the interior life as a certain tendency to look with complacency on our own state, to pass over trifling faults, and to neglect the sanctification of common duties. No grace bestowed produces self-complacency in a really humble heart which refers all to God ; neither will it look upon any duty as insignificant which can be done so as to please Him.

Spirit of gentleness ! thou wast not made
To wrestle with an evil world, 'mid clash
Of passion's steely mail, and the loud din
Of spirits framed in iron mould ; but He
Who bid thee sojourn here, hath haply sent
To show awhile, in live reality,
The loveliness of natures trained for heaven,
And fit thee by thine earthly pilgrimage
For thine enduring home.

Nineteenth Wednesday after Trinity.

And they shall see His Face. REVELATION xxii. 4.

THE vision of righteousness is succeeded by the vision of grace. Butler in his dying moments expressed his awe at appearing face to face before the Moral Governor of the world, his chaplain spoke of "the Blood which cleanseth from all sin." "Ah, this is comfortable," he said; with these words he gave up his soul to God. The sequence is a necessary sequence. He only has access to the Eternal Love who has stood face to face with the Eternal Righteousness. He only who has learned to feel the awe will be taught to know the grace. The Righteous Judge is a loving Father also. This is the central lesson of Christianity. Of this He has given absolute assurance in the life, death, words, and works of Christ. The incarnation of the Son is the mirror of the Father's love. Happy he who shall realize this fact in all its fulness. Happy he on whom the light of the Gospel of Christ shall shine. All our interests in life, merged, forgotten in God's love, will come back with an intensity and force unknown before. Each outline will stand out in the light of His grace. We are to lose our souls only to find them again. We are charged to give up brethren and lands, all that is lovely and precious in our eyes—to give up all to God, only to receive them back from Him a hundredfold, even in this present time. Our affections, our friendships, our hopes, our business and our pleasure, our intellectual pursuits, must be brought to the sanctuary and bathed in the glory of His presence, that we may take them again, baptized and regenerate, purer, higher, more real, more abiding far than before.

Nineteenth Thursday after Trinity.

In simplicity and godly sincerity. 2 CORINTHIANS i. 12.

GOD's Holy Spirit will only hold converse with the simple soul. Simplicity, *i.e.* singleness of heart, is very dear to Him; the gift of a "free Spirit" is specially given where that is found, and He delights to kindle the single-minded with the pure rays of His own bright light. The simple heart has its special troubles; it is wont to be troubled with an overwhelming inward compunction at the thought of its own or other men's sins; God's Holy Spirit knows how to lighten this trial, till the soul learns how even to rejoice in its troubles. "It is good for me that I have been troubled." He pours such a flood of sweetness into the will through love, into the understanding by thoughts of peace, that the entire being seems to rest in utter joyfulness in Him. "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you." He breathes the true spirit of resignation into the simple heart; He enables it to realize how brief the season of sorrow is, how endless the hope before him. Even when His own dear Hand inflicts a merciful wound, He pours in the wine and oil of His ineffable consolations, and His correction seems almost more loving than any caress. Be sure that the simplicity of a Christian heart is more acceptable to the Holy Spirit than the best prepared, most studied devotions; and such a man is likely to benefit more than others by whatever that gracious Spirit vouchsafes to do for him, by reason of his simple unquestioning faith.

Guard Thou, and keep my soul from ill !

Nineteenth Friday after Trinity.

Christ glorified not Himself. HEBREWS v. 5.

WHAT is the lesson of life which is taught by the vision of the Crucified? There is one lesson that embraces all lessons. It is not patience, though that stands out prominently; it is not humility, though that is the pervading tone of all the mystery; it is not energy of will, though that lies beneath all the self-sacrifice; nor is it love, though that is the power that moves all its hidden springs. There is a yet deeper lesson to be learned, which, if truly learned, causes all other lessons to be comparatively easy. It is deadness to self. This is greater than deadness to the world, for the world acts on us only through self. The world is to every man only what self causes it to be. The world is overcome as self is overcome. But when the world is left, self may remain. The lesson which the Cross teaches of deadness to self, will affect with the keenest touch some one special portion of our complex self. The self in every man is that leading infirmity, that besetting natural irregularity, or evil tendency, which has been the fruitful source of the sins of a life. This is the self which we have to dread.

Keep us, Lord; O Lord, uphold us,
From the tempter safely fold us.

We are weak, on Thee we call;
Christ, support us, or we fall.

Father! dangers round us throng;
We are feeble, Thou art strong.

Over rock, and hill, and sea,
Guide us home to heaven and Thee.

Nineteenth Saturday after Trinity.

Examine yourselves. 2 CORINTHIANS xiii. 5.

GOD bids you examine yourselves. "Examine your own consciences," our Church repeats, "and that not lightly and after the manner of dissemblers with God;" examine your lives and conversation by the rule of God's commandments. "Examine thyself, that thou mayest know thyself. Thou must examine thyself, that thou mayest keep the knowledge of thyself. Thou must examine thyself again and again, as thou wouldest glean after harvest, that nothing be lost. Thou must examine thyself, not by the examples of those around thee, nor by the maxims of the world, but by the light of God's commandments. Thou must pray to thy Father, Who seeth in secret, that He would shed His light into thy soul, to teach thee of what to repent, what to amend; that thou mayest know all, sorrow for all, leave all, be forgiven all which is against the will and goodness of the all-good God." All holiness is contained in two points: knowledge of God, and knowledge of self. "Lord, make me to know Thee, and to know myself." The prayer is short, though its meaning is infinite. Knowledge of God elevates the soul; knowledge of self humbles it. This very knowledge of God which lifts man up, humbles him at the same time by the comparison of himself with God; and self-knowledge, while it humbles him, lifts him up by necessitating his approach to God. Ladder of sanctity, whereon men descend while they ascend, and in the same proportion! For the true elevation of man is inseparable from his true humiliation.

But when in men grown high and bold
Christ's image He doth not behold,
In Christ no more He hears their call,
He turns His countenance, and they fall.

Twentieth Sunday after Trinity.

Walk circumspectly. EPHESIANS v. 15.

WHAT is S. Paul saying? "See that ye walk circumspectly." He knew that His Master, when He sent His disciples "as sheep in the midst of wolves," further charged them to be also "as doves." "Ye shall be harmless," saith He, "as doves." Forasmuch then as they were both amongst wolves, and were commanded not to defend themselves but to suffer evil, they needed this admonition, "Look how ye walk." Whole cities were at war with them; yea, this war made its way also into houses. They heard Christ say, "He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me." Lest they should think that he was introducing nothing but wars and fighting, he says, "See that ye walk circumspectly." Show all deference and obedience, whenever it does no harm to the message, whenever it does not stand in the way of godliness. The following will help us to carry the advice of S. Paul into effect in our everyday life. Be as little alive as may be to what is going on in the world around you. Keep diligent guard over your senses and the impressions they receive from outward things. Beware that your heart be not absorbed by creature love. Look to God's Word and look to your own heart and life. Consider whether they agree together. He who rejects God in his daily life, what wonder if God rejects him in his season of prayer.

Old friends, old scenes, will lovelier be,
As more of heaven in each we see;
Some softening gleam of love and prayer
Shall dawn on every cross and care.

Twentieth Monday after Trinity.

Redeeming the time. EPHESIANS v. 16.

THE will of God was the first cause of our redemption ; the atoning death of Jesus its means. Such then was the value of free obedience in the sight of God, that in the priceless sufferings of the God-man Christ Jesus, our Redeemer, obedience entered as a primary condition of their value. And yet it is on this very side that He, our Saviour, sets Himself forth as our Example. Not in His power, but in His moral Being, His humility, His love, His obedience, does He give Himself to copy, "that as He was, so should we be, in this world." What is said of Him our Head, may, in Him and through His grace, be said in our measure of us, His members. He speaketh of us in Himself ; and we in Him may say, "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O my God : Thy law is within my heart." We, too, as members of Him, have been sent into the world to accomplish in ourselves, and to discharge, in the order of His creation, a certain will of God, and in the knowledge and accomplishment of that will lies our salvation, and the secret of our predestination. Therefore redeem the time. Human society, in God's Hand, is not its own end, but a means for forming each soul of man, amid and through the trials incident to its daily tasks, for the perfection of its being.

So should we live, that every hour
May die as dies the natural flower,
A self-reviving thing of power ;

That every thought and every deed
May hold within itself the seed
Of future good and future need.

Twentieth Tuesday after Trinity.

Because the days are evil. EPHESIANS v. 16.

YES, thou wilt find the thought of the Cross of Christ all powerful to save thee from sin. A holy man says "that where the death of Christ is borne about with us sin cannot reign. For such is the power of the Cross of Christ that if it be placed before the eyes, and faithfully retained in the mind, so that the eye of the mind should look intently to the death of Christ itself, no lust, no wrath, no envy can overcome; but at its presence all that army of sin and of the flesh is put to flight." His wounds are more eloquent than words. Thy soul is a part of the price of those sufferings. He died for thee, as much as if there had been none beside to die for. If passion assail thee, think of that tortured Frame, and profane not thine own which He died to redeem and sanctify; if thy temptation would involve others in thy sin, think that for them, with thee, Jesus died. If envy, think of His love; if avarice, of that bared Form; if ambition, of the crown which He wore for thee, with which our sins crowned Him, the piercing thorns. Look to Him now; copy, as thou canst, that pattern of love which He gave thee; give thyself by His grace to the glad and easy service of His love, that in that day of awe thou mayst escape the unutterable misery of the endless loss of God—

Where the fire is never quenched,
Where the worm can never die.

Twentieth Wednesday after Trinity.

Wait patiently. PSALM xxxvii. 7.

HOLINESS is not the growth of a day; its fruits come but slowly to maturity; and a gradual work is far more enduring than one hastily or impatiently achieved. In art watch the artist putting touch upon touch, stroke upon stroke, until he brings about the desired result, and be assured that your soul needs the like treatment, that no perfection can be reached save by degrees and through patience. So it is with conscious operations of God's grace within your soul, or a living sense of His Divine consolations. You must wait patiently to realize them. Nevertheless, we are all so undisciplined and self-willed, even in the holiest things, we are so eager at once to obtain whatever we desire, we have so little notion of real patient waiting upon God, that it is no matter of wonder that we so often fail in our attempts. For instance, you set yourself to overcome an evil inclination, but you fix a limit in your own mind to the time of struggle, and expect victory within that limit. You seek after God, thinking yourself entitled to find Him after a certain length of search. Never limit your waiting upon God. If victory tarries, if holiness seems farther off than ever, even if God seems to hide Himself more than He once did, still wait patiently, never weary of waiting. "Tarry thou the Lord's leisure," and doubt not but that in His own good time He will "comfort thine heart."

Till the flood of morning rays
Wake us to a song of praise.

Twentieth Thursday after Trinity.

Let the people renew their strength. ISAIAH xli. 1.

TRY not to be slack or downcast, kindle your energies, renew your efforts, and beware of growing disgusted with duties to which you are pledged ; remember that you must overcome besetting sins ; you must grow in holiness and find out God and persevere. If nature grows weary, still do not be impatient or irritable. Keep yourself calm, bethink you that what we cannot do to-day we may accomplish to-morrow ; plod on faithfully and trustfully ; be more than ever diligent in doing all that is right ; gather yourself more carefully together ; let your longings after God be more earnest, and thus draw fresh strength out of your weakness, and let the temptation to be disheartened and to give up be a stimulus to renewed but patient exertion. Be like the sick folk who sat round the pool of Bethesda, waiting for the Angel to come and trouble the waters, and, like them, you will be healed. There can be no progress without this waiting. One may even dare to say that God *cannot* withhold Himself from the soul which waits lovingly upon Him. He yearns over it, and will not fail to give Himself to its desires. But He accepts the heart's cravings, which are often the measure of love ; He tests the sincerity of our desires thereby—of our real will to conquer faults—our real determination to stand at the door and knock until it be opened to us. It will be open at last, never fear.

E'en now the shadows break and gleams Divine
Edge the dim distant line.

. . . Thou shalt prevail !

Twentieth Friday after Trinity.

O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt.
S. MATTHEW XV. 28.

THERE is no mental attitude so free from earthliness, so capable of looking straight at God in His holiness, consequently so near union with Him, as this spirit of faith, which, as one of the fathers says, rises beyond all limits of human reason, of nature, and of experience. Let these strive to fetter the soul as they may, the eagle's wings of faith will soar above them. Darkness may lie, vast and chaos-like, between the soul and God; but faith will pierce that darkness, and its penetrating ray will reach straight to the Bosom of God. Bitterness may whisper to the afflicted soul that God is no longer the loving, tender Lord it once rested on; but faith overstretcheth all experience, and teaches that He is the same to all eternity, though out of very love He may hide His Face awhile. Temptation suggests that the soul is forsaken, left a prey to the enemy; but faith boldly proclaims that God was never nearer, never more tenderly watchful over His child, than amid that conflict the very fierceness of which is a sacred chain binding him to his Lord. Thoughts of despair may assault the trembling conscience, but faith with uplifted hand points to the endless abyss of God's mercies. Faith can triumph over the outcries of nature, the anguish of conscience, the hard experience of life. The grace that springs from true faith is so firm, it fills the mind with such strength, that

The soul, reposing in assured belief,
Feels herself happy amidst all her grief;
Forgets her labour as she toils along,
Weeps tears of joy, and bursts into a song.

Twentieth Saturday after Trinity.

Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ. EPHESIANS v. 19, 20.

“HE that rejoices,” says S. Chrysostom, “in the Lord cannot be cast out of this pleasure by any accident. For all other grounds of joy are changeable and fleeting and easily altered; and this is not the only evil about them, but also, while they last, the pleasure which they furnish to us is not so great as to repel and overshadow the sadness which comes on us from other causes. But the fear of God has both these qualities; it is firm and immovable, and it teems with so great a joy that we retain no feeling of all our evils. For he who fears God as he ought, and puts confidence in Him, has gained the root of pleasure and possesses the whole fountain of cheerfulness; and as a small spark of fire falling into the boundless sea is forthwith extinguished, so whatever may befall the man that fears God, falls, as it were, into a vast sea of gladness, and is quenched and swallowed up. If when thou art in prosperity and happiness, in success and enjoyment, thou givest thanks, it is nothing great or wonderful; but what is looked for is, that thou shouldst give thanks when in tribulation and in sorrow. Utter nothing in preference to these words, “I thank Thee, Lord.”

Rejoice in Christ alway—
When earth looks heavenly bright,
When joy makes glad the livelong day,
And peace shuts in the night.

Rejoice, when care and woe
The fainting soul oppress,
When tears at wakeful midnight flow,
And morn brings heaviness.

Twenty-first Sunday after Trinity.

My brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. EPHESIANS VI. 10, 11.

WE have a warfare to wage, a warfare within ourselves, against ourselves, and against those, more powerful, subtle, skilful than we; enemies who know, many of you, your weak points better than you know yourselves. We have "a strong man" with whom to fight; a stronger through Whom to overcome. Against us is the craft of Satan to overthrow us. The strength, the wisdom, the love of Christ our God may be ours, through which to overcome. And about what is the strife? The soul, its life or death. And what the loss? To be shut out from the love of God, and be the companion of devils, hating and hated. What the reward? God Himself. He Himself says, "I am your exceeding great Reward." And what are ye doing then? Fighting, surely, with your whole might, with the whole grace of God, straining every nerve, watching at every moment, guarding against every peril! This is surely your first thought in the morning, "What may I do this day to make this great prize my own, to escape that unbearable woe?" This is your last thought at night, "Wherein have I failed this day? what can I amend on the morrow?" Whatever else ye do, this cannot but be your first thought. This must be the aim of all your aims.

Hush thee and seek,
With thoughts in prayer and watchful eyes,
My [Christ] seasons sent for thee to speak,
And use them as they rise.

Twenty-first Monday after Trinity.

We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. EPHESIANS vi. 12.

LIFE is a warfare, Holy Scripture is full of it. It tells us of foes, fighting, armour, rewards, life, death; of war within us and without us. Within us are "the lusts which war in our members," war "against the soul;" "the law in our members, warring against the law of our mind, and bringing us into captivity to the law of sin, which is in our members." Without us are foes, deadly, implacable, unsleeping, experienced in near six thousand years of human weakness, and passions, and unsteadfastness, and sin. "We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." There seems to be ranks and powers of evil angels as of good. One of these our Lord singles out, as chief enemy, who has an access to our souls; "takes the word out of men's hearts;" the father of lies, who entered into Judas, and put it into his heart to betray our Lord; and who desired to have Peter, to sift him through and through if so be he might fall.

Christian, dost thou see them
On the holy ground,
How the troops of Midian
Prowl and prowl around?

Christian, up and smite them,
Counting gain but loss,
Smite them by the merit
Of the holy Cross.

Twenty-first Tuesday after Trinity.

Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. EPHESIANS vi. 13.

GOD arms us from head to foot. "He gives us the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation," and the rest of that Divine armoury. Yet He shows us thereby how whole and entire our armour must be, if we would not be wounded. He exhorts, by S. Paul, "to fight the good fight," and to "lay" (grasp) hold of eternal life, as being one and the same thing. "I have fought the good fight," says S. Paul, when about to suffer death for the Lord. Our Lord, speaking to the whole Church of all times, in His words to the seven churches of Asia, closes alike rebuke or encouragement with the promise "to him that overcometh." Whether they had to repent of leaving their first love ; to hold fast what they had, and "to keep His works unto the end," to "strengthen what remains ;" or to cast off lukewarmness, and "be zealous and repent," the promise to all alike is "to him that overcometh." Our Lord sums up in the last, His sevenfold promise, "to him that overcometh I will grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne." "He that overcometh shall inherit all things ; and I will be his God, and he shall be My son." To be saved from the hands of our enemies, that we might serve God in holiness and righteousness before Him all the days of our life, is the sum of the promise.

Oh, by Thy Name upon our hearts engraved,
And by the Blood that bought our souls for Thee,
Bring us at last unto that blessed haven
Where there is no more night and no more sea !

Twenty-first Wednesday after Trinity.

How many are mine iniquities and sins? JOB xiii. 23.

OUR trial, by God's appointment and mercy, lies mostly in some few things. We bring trials upon ourselves, which God did not intend for us. We increase our own trials by every consent to sin. Most are born with some one leading fault, in which their own chief trial lies. Most have some natural graces. And so whereas, if we were wise, we should forget any good thing in us, owning that whatever it is, it is God's gift in us, and should think only of our remaining evil, people blind themselves to their own evil by thinking of the evil of others and of their own good. Such was the Pharisee, whom our Lord condemns. Doubtless he was "not an extortioner, unjust, adulterer," or, in many ways, "even as that publican;" he used some bodily denial, and gave alms. These things he dwelt upon. And so he contrived to hide from himself his own besetting sins, pride and contempt. We ought to compare ourselves with no one, except to abase ourselves; and men do compare themselves with others, only to exalt themselves. We may see in wellnigh every one some grace better than our own, from which we may learn; and men look to see in every one some evil which is not in themselves, to comfort themselves that they are not worse than others. To see defects in the good is a comfort to them, because they themselves look less evil.

Ah, vain . . .

Man from the heart must weed the bitter root,
While the new law ingrafted puts forth fruit
And drinks the blessing of the pitying skies.

Twenty-first Thursday after Trinity.

There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, Who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it. I CORINTHIANS x. 13.

APOSTLES, Prophets, Martyrs had the same sinful nature cleaving to them as we have. S. James and S. John sought high places; S. Paul was a persecutor; S. John was fiery; S. Mark shrank from peril; S. Peter was rash and denied our Lord; all forsook Him in the time of peril. But what became they? How was Saul the persecutor transformed by the grace of God into the likeness of his Master. His spirit obeyed every motion of His Holy Spirit until he could say, "Not I, but Christ liveth in me." And yet these blessed Apostles, whose names were written in heaven, they who, themselves subdued to God, subdued the world unto the Crucified; these chosen vessels of the Most High to "bear His Name before kings and princes," who made an unjust judge tremble before His prisoner, and a king "almost" to exchange his crown for their bonds; these, to whom "to live was Christ," who "bore about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus," to whom our Lord bequeathed "the fellowship of His sufferings," to "fill up" what He willed to "remain over of suffering for His Church;"—these men were born with the same passions as we, they had the same struggle. "By the grace of God" they "were what they were."

My stock lies dead, and no increase
Doth my dull husbandry improve;
O let Thy graces without cease
Drop from above.

Twenty-first Friday after Trinity.

Prove your own selves. 2 CORINTHIANS xiii. 5.

OUR first step in the Christian warfare is to gain a knowledge of our own selves as a whole—what our faults are ; then what our chief fault is (whatever it be), that from which the rest, be they pride, anger, animal pleasure, or the like, flow [or proceed]. It is something to know thus much. For thus we know what to pray against, what grace to pray for. Observe carefully, day by day, the occasion of thy fall ; what just before happens which leads thee to it. Thus, whether the fault be anger or pride (to take these), people generally know thus much, that they are liable to be put out, or to be proud ; and perhaps they could tell, if they thought, that this or that calls up their anger or their pride. And mostly you will find that the things which tempt you to your besetting sin are much fewer than you think at first. You are confused about them because you do not know them, and not knowing them, you think that they are many more than they are ; for until you know them distinctly, you do not know that it is one and the same trial coming again and again. We say commonly, “forewarned, forearmed.” The very temptation to sin becomes, when you know it well, the sentinel to warn you against it.

Oh no ; our best life is to know
In Him we live and move ;
We lose ourselves in Him below,
Our very life is love.

To know our weakness is our strength,
Our wealth our want to feel,
Our peace of soul that He at length
This inward want reveal.

Twenty-first Saturday after Trinity.

All I have is thine. S. LUKE xv. 31.

CHRIST saith to thee, "All which I have is thine," thine, according to thy power to contain it. Cast out of thyself what chokes thy heart, that thou canst not contain everlastingly His love. He bids thee by His grace enlarge thy heart, that He may fill thee more largely. Thy deeds now are the seed-corn of eternity. Each single act, in each several day, good or bad, is a portion of that seed. Is the strife long and hard? Long and hard it would be to be ever defeated. But Christ shall lighten it for thee. He will bear it in thee. He will bear thee over it, as He will bear thee over the molten surges of this burning world. Christ will go before thee. He saith unto thee, "Follow Me, and where I am, there shall My servant be." "Follow Me, be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." "If Christ be for us, who shall be against us?" Thou art safe if thou fight for Christ, and with Christ. Only give not way. If defeated, be the humbler and rise again; begin again, and pray to persevere. If thou succeed, give "thanks to Him Who giveth us the victory, through Jesus Christ our Lord." And He will, by His Blood, intercede for thee; He will, by His grace, fight in thee. He will keep thee unto the end, Who Himself crowneth, and is crowned, in all who are faithful to His grace.

Jesus, compassionate and kind;
Jesus, bright Leader of the blind;
Jesus, all sweets in Him we find.

Jesus, with every virtue crowned,
Gives comfort infinite.

Twenty-second Sunday after Trinity.

I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy. PHILIPPIANS i. 3, 4.

No duty is so frequently set before us in the Holy Scriptures as that of prayer. The sacred volume abounds in exhortations and encouragements to the diligent exercise of this high and holy privilege. Both by precept and example prayer is constantly urged as a duty of the highest importance, the right fulfilment of which is attended with the choicest blessings. The subject of prayer is indeed of vital importance to each one of us. Our spiritual life cannot be sustained in any vigour, if sustained at all, without prayer. It is the very breath of the spiritual life, the unfailing token of its vitality. What is prayer? Prayer is communion with God. It is the reaching forth of the soul of man after God. It is the act of putting ourselves into the more immediate presence of our Father in heaven, and of communing with Him. It is reverently speaking to God with kindled affections and a submissive will. It is laying bare our hearts before Him. It is realizing the blessed truth that though everywhere God is to be found by those who look for Him, yet in the still hour of prayer we endure "as seeing Him Who is invisible," and with the deepest prostration of soul adore in the brightness of the Heavenly Presence. Let us reform our prayers and we shall reform our lives.

The wrestler, who an earthly crown would gain,
Casts each besetting care and weight behind ;
The mariner, to cross the distant main,
Gives thoughts of rest and softness to the wind,
For wealth that lasts and joys that cannot fail
They every fading trifle cast aside,
With sound true heart, if so they may prevail,
Trusting in hopes which with their God abide.

Twenty-second Monday after Trinity.

Men ought always to pray, and not to faint. S. LUKE xviii. 1.

PRAYER is an important and a necessary duty, sanctioned and enforced by our Lord's own example, by that of His Apostles, and by the practice of holy men in all ages. Let, then, each ask himself, Do I engage in this great duty in any manner suited to its vast importance? Am I instant in prayer? The choicest blessings for time and eternity, if you will *pray* for them, are promised you ; nothing, if you will not. You must, you will, be left by an offended God to yourselves; and to be left to yourselves is to be left to certain ruin ; it is to be left to blindness, yea, to utter misery. "Ephraim is joined unto idols, let him alone." Let us rest assured that the blessings which our heavenly Father has to bestow are not such cheap and common things as to be forced on those who despise them. He has made our asking in great measure a condition of His giving. If we wish to receive, we must ask ; if we desire to find, we must seek. When on earth our blessed Lord seldom worked a cure unsought. He would have the sufferers either ask themselves or by others ask. Prayer is a deep necessity of our spiritual life. In order to lead a prayerful life you will have to give up very much that is pleasing to the natural man and to practise self-denial ; but look you to a happy life, to a peaceful death, then to a crown of glory and a seat on the Saviour's throne.

The man is highly blessed
Who makes it his delight
To do his Master's bidding,
And serve Him day and night ;
Who asks Him for His blessing
When he begins the day,
His sins with grief confessing
When he has gone astray.

Twenty-second Tuesday after Trinity.

For to will is present with me ; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not : but the evil which I would not, that I do. . . . I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man : but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. ROMANS vii. 18-23.

WE come now to consider some of the various hindrances which beset us when we would pray, and the best way to overcome them. The first great hindrance to prayer which we have to overcome arises from the nature of our hearts. They are of the earth, earthy, consequently truly to pray is and must be no light or easy matter. If our hearts were not alienated from God, we should very well know what to say and how to say it. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." And very often it is simply from the barrenness of the heart that the mouth keepeth silence. This, then, is the first hindrance. What is the remedy for this? Earnestly seeking, by the grace of God, to get the mastery over our earthly hearts. The conflict with self will no doubt at times be very severe ; our sincerity, we may be sure, will be very thoroughly tested ; we shall meet with many a defeat. But let us not be cast down. It is "no strange thing" that is happening unto us. "Early efforts," it has been well remarked, "are for the most part clumsy failures. Repeated trials are the uniform conditions of success."

Go up, reluctant heart,
Take up thy rest above ;
Arise, earth-clinging thoughts,
Ascend, my lingering love !

Twenty-second Wednesday after Trinity.

But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. 2 CORINTHIANS xi. 3.

THE second hindrance which besets us when we would pray comes from that formidable enemy to all true devotion with whom we have to struggle—the devil. He places many difficulties in our way. The conflict which we have to wage with him is most severe. He knows how strong even the weakest become when on their knees, and so exerts all his malice and cunning to hinder prayer. If he can only keep us from prayer, no matter how, he is content. We listen to his crafty suggestions, although the Saviour Himself has told us that “he is a liar, and the father of it.” Let us rest assured that if we are earnest and sincere, we shall not only be left alone, but shall gain the victory. Let the devil not beguile us. Oh remember how he tempted the Saviour in the wilderness, and how the Saviour overcame him! Three several times was temptation offered, and three several times refused. So there is One Who “in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, is able to succour them that are tempted.” Oh how blessed is the thought! how real the help! how mighty the deliverance! His right Hand and holy Arm shall give the victory. Behold, the devil will leave us, and holy Angels shall come and minister to us instead.

It is prayer,
Winged by faith's pure resolve. Prayer shall prevail.
It hath the promise. Into life's dim vale
Prayer doth of help the golden gates unbar.

Twenty-second Thursday after Trinity.

First the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear.
S. MARK iv. 28.

As we now sow, we shall hereafter reap. How can we sow to any profit, unless we are diligent in prayer? No real growth can take place without prayer, and it is idle to expect it. Let us, then, by the grace of God overcome every hindrance to prayer. Bear in mind what a truly solemn thing it is to die, we must all feel it to be so; but is it not also a very solemn thing to live? True prayer is the source and secret of the strength in which alone we can meet the trials and difficulties and duties of life. Remember for your encouragement that all satisfactory growth is *gradual*. It is so in nature; it is gradual, and, what is more, it is *silent*. "There is first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear." So it is in grace. What we all have especially to look to is that growth shall be going on, that there shall be no going back. Stand still we cannot even if we would. If not advancing, we are going back. See the vast importance of being earnest and sincere.

Work while it is called to-day,
 Watch and pray!
With both thine hands right earnestly,
 As in sight of God Most High,
 Thy calling ply.
Watch! it is the Master calls thee;
 Pray! it is His Ear that hears;
 Up! shake off thy chilly fears!
Mindful that whate'er befalls thee
 Leaves thee further on thy way!
 Watch and pray!

Twenty-second Friday after Trinity.

Lord, teach us to pray. S. LUKE xi. 1.

THE Disciples of Christ were sensible of their deficiency, and did not hesitate to ask to be taught. Must we not confess our own similar need? And ought we not, therefore, to receive thankfully any helps for the right fulfilment of this great duty which may be set before us. There are several *helps* to prayer the diligent use of which He Who "heareth prayer" will vouchsafe to bless. Endeavour, when you begin to pray, *to realize the presence of God*. Believe that when you kneel to pray, you do indeed enter into His presence. Try to remember the fact that the Eye of God is then immediately upon you; that He then specially sees you, reads you through and through, and marks every word and thought. Do not go hastily to your knees or suddenly rise from prayer. Bishop Horne tells us, "He who would pray must first retire." Meditation, which is the mother of devotion, is the daughter of retirement. They who do not meditate cannot pray; they who do not retire, can do neither. Before beginning to pray ponder for a short time on the majesty of Him to Whom you are going to speak. Meditate on the gentle, and viewless as the wind, yet powerful and life-giving, influences of the Holy Spirit. Read some short passages of Holy Writ. And then, with a spirit thus attuned to holy things, kneel before Him Who "seeth in secret."

I come to Thee to-night,
In my lone closet where no eye can see,
And dare to crave communion high with Thee,
Father of love and light.

Twenty-second Saturday after Trinity.

Be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer. I S. PETER iv. 7.

NECESSARY as the habit of watchfulness is at all times to the Christian, it is more especially needful to him as he prays. Watch then against wandering thoughts. How often do they grievously harass us as we pray! If we would shut out the world and subdue self, and be alone with God, we must "watch unto prayer." We cannot pour out our hearts in prayer unto God, if we allow our thoughts to carry us whithersoever they list. We must gently but very firmly control our thoughts, and inwardly resolve not to be drawn aside by them. Another help to prayer is *self-examination*; this practice honestly employed cannot fail to afford much useful help to prayer. We cannot know, or know to any purpose, our own great sinfulness and need of amendment and of the grace of God unless we look carefully and frequently into our hearts and lives. In our secret chamber we should with open mouth confess to God the sinfulness of our nature, how prone we are to sin on the slightest temptation. Confession is an important part or help to prayer, and from acts of sin which we have committed we should turn our confession to sins of omission. How many are the duties which we neglect to perform, or do not perform from the right motive! Bear in mind that each neglect of duty is sin. Look steadily at this fact. Intercession for others is by no means an unimportant part of prayer, of which S. Paul alludes in his Epistle, "I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy." Lord,

Do Thou with Thine Almighty Hand
Thy loving Saints defend.
What though, by earthly woes oppressed,
The body wearied lies,
Yet may our spirit freely wing
Its passage to the skies.

Twenty-third Sunday after Trinity.

Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample. PHILIPPIANS iii. 17.

S. PAUL taught the Gospel not only by his words, but also by his life. He wrought by his own hands, to show them "that by so labouring they ought to support the weak." He was able to say with confidence, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ." Thus it pleased God not only to afford us a perfect pattern in His Son, but in His Apostles and Saints also living ensamples, in men subject to like passions as we are. They shine like lights in the world amidst the darkness that surrounds us, living by a higher rule, and as it were walking in heaven. "Yes; their deeds and trophies," says a saintly man, "have always been one of the dearest subjects to me since I was a mere child. According to my poor skill, I have tried, however imperfectly, to set forth their glorious and valiant deeds here to others. The thought of thoughts, the older I grew, the more it fixed itself on me, is this, that they were sinners. I can despair of nothing when I remember that. I see how hard they had to struggle with timidity and despair. S. Peter, though our Lord was by his side, began to sink in the sea. I see how valiantly they had to do battle with their tempers. I see Peter warming himself when his Master was before the seat of unrighteous judgment. Can I be surprised if in you or in myself I should see a desire of ease that is not in unison with the Cross?"

The faith that highest shines
No deed of charity declines,
And seeks no rest and shuns no strife
In working out a holy life.

Twenty-third Monday after Trinity.

Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample. PHILIPPIANS iii. 17.

LET a true conformity to the beloved Son, the express Image of the Father, be the unmoved desire of the soul. Rise to an ambition which is above worlds, which soars to the highest heaven, which satisfies itself only in God. Shrink not even from the profounder depths of abasement, of shame, of loss, of giving place to another, of inward suffering, of being unknown to fame. We may choose the life of self-sacrifice, we cannot choose altogether the form in which it is destined to manifest itself in us. That is of God. We may perhaps choose its outward form as to its general bearing ; we cannot choose its particular details. Nor can we always forecast our trials, or trace ourselves up to them by a certain foreknowledge. We cannot foresee them. Often they come suddenly, when we least expect them, when we had looked for a wholly different result. We cannot choose the exact form of the humiliation or suffering, we can choose the spirit of it. But we must ever cast ourselves on God, and wait till He uplift the veil, and shed within us the needed strength, and show us how His purpose is to be practically fulfilled. "Only grant, O Lord, that I may be a vessel of Thy love ; only grant that I may be chastened into humility with Christ ; only grant that I may be so weaned from all natural desires as to rise wholly above self." This each of us may ask, and resolve. The voice will be heard in its own time telling us, "This is the way, walk ye in it."

Twenty-third Tuesday after Trinity.

For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the Cross of Christ: whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things. PHILIPPIANS iii. 18, 19.

EVEN in that saintly church of Philippi there were Christians in name who forgot the Cross. When S. Paul thought of it he wept; and it so affected him, because it touched him in the most tender point of all, his Master's Cross. He wept, because they in some mysterious sense "crucified afresh the Son of God." His wounds bleed again; His enemies are not Jews but Christians. They are the enemies of the Cross and of Him Who is seen thereon; and therefore their "end is destruction," although for them Christ died. Our King is set forth on earth nowhere else but on a cross, on the Cross His title is written. This is the King. It is written in every language, for all people are His; but the Cross is His only throne below. The Cross speaks of our God with a body full of pain, because our bodies are full of sin. But their "god" is their belly. The chief object they look to is ease and luxury, serving the fleshly mind. The carnal mind is death and enmity against God, and the reason is, because in the Cross is life. The things in which the natural man glories are a shame to the Christian. "I will not glory," says S. Paul, "except in my infirmities, and gladly in them will I glory, that the power of Christ may rest upon me."

So shall voice, mind, and strength conspire
Thy praise eternal to resound;
So shall our hearts be set on fire
And kindle every heart around.

Twenty-third Wednesday after Trinity.

*For He hath made Him to be sin for us, Who knew no sin ;
that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.*
2 CORINTHIANS v. 21.

WE measure the height of our exaltation in Christ by the depth of His humiliation for us. *His* stooping to our sins, *our* rising to His righteousness ; *His* sharing our sinful humanity, *our* sharing His Divine nature. We may well tremble as we rejoice. Let us place clearly before our minds in what "the righteousness of God" in us consists. The source and ground of our righteousness is the new creation in us of the glory of the sacred Humanity of our Lord, and through His Humanity a partaking of the Divine nature. As He is identified with us in our shame, so are we identified with Him in the powers of His new supernatural life. It exists in us as a new world of life, an actual indwelling of God in us, in all the capacities of its ultimate fulness, to be developed as we co-operate with its manifold energies of grace. Our "righteousness of God" is the actual presence of Christ within us. The powers of righteousness, the acts and sensations and triumphs of sanctity, are attained, as this His inward presence finds a ready response and a constant compliant will—as He, Whom we have received in a marvellous mystery, and in Whom appearing for us before the Father we are accepted, stirs within us with ever-fresh life, and ever more exuberant fulness, transforming us into Himself ever more and more.

Our great High Priest and Shepherd, Thou
Within the veil art entered now,
To offer there Thy precious Blood,
Once poured on earth a cleansing flood.
And thence the Church, Thy chosen Bride,
With countless gifts of grace supplied,
Through all her members draws from Thee
Her hidden life of sanctity.

Twenty-third Thursday after Trinity.

For our conversation is in heaven. PHILIPPIANS iii. 20.

WE are citizens not of this world, but of heaven, “where our life is hid with Christ in God,” “from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.” Our life is one of expectation, not of enjoyment; we are in a place which does not belong to us, nor we to it; as strangers we might say, and exiles far from home. But this is not all, for we bear about with us a body of death; we have a close-pursuing and inseparable enemy ever about us, and in whose country we dwell, which is this flesh, and which will overcome us, unless by daily dying we succeed in subduing it. It is this flesh ever with us and influencing our hearts which would make a god of this world’s consolations; which glories in subduing the immortal spirit to itself, and fills the mind with earthly things. With this we contend, and long to be released from this contest with it, and therefore we look for the Saviour. Therefore be ye as children of the light; put on the armour of light; put on, be clothed all over with the Lord Christ. Be conformable to Him, do all things for His sake, love all men in Him, let Him dwell within you, and dwell ye in Him more and more, clothe yourselves with Him, be armed with Him. Your heart, your hands, your feet—let all your members be in Him. Ever remember that your conversation is in heaven.

Members of Christ, children of God,
Inheritors of heaven,
What titles, what a bright abode
Mercy to man hath given!

Great God, how grateful we should be
For all that Thou hast done
To make poor sinners one with Thee,
Through Thine eternal Son!

Twenty-third Friday after Trinity.

Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious Body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself. PHILIPPIANS iii. 21.

NOT new are these blessed words, but if we meditate upon them, they will be full of new life, new hopes. "The working whereby He is able to subdue all things to Himself," that is, His Spirit working within us a new body and the power of the Resurrection. It was to set forth this that our Lord went forth working His miracles on dead bodies. For this did He after the Resurrection manifest so often His own risen Body. How is He forming this change? It is by His Spirit within us, first working the living change in our souls, that thus taking up His abode with us, He may quicken us into a spiritual body, casting off this vile body, with all its evil lusts and affections. It is therefore by His thus working this change within us that we are "raised together with Him," "made to sit in heavenly places," and to "have our conversation in heaven." As citizens of heaven, we have a heavenly King, for Whose kingdom we daily, hourly pray. He is our King now, for our very calling and state as Christians is termed "the kingdom of heaven and of God."

Redeemèd spirits, they who near Thy throne,
They, and Thy suffering Saints, who wait below,
'Mid sins, temptations, weariness, and woe,
Swell the same chorus; every tongue and tribe
To Thee all might, all majesty ascribe;
Thine is the kingdom, reign in every heart.

Twenty-third Saturday after Trinity.

To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne. REVELATION iii. 21.

LET the soul, feeding on its anticipated portion of promised bliss, go forth into the expanse of the unseen world, the unfolding mystery of the future. Many are utterly lost because their inward gaze is fixed on the clouds which perpetually hang around the horizon of their life. Yet the true life is beyond. Beyond is the only enduring vision. Beyond is the eternal. Beyond is the interpretation of the mystery of the dispensations, the secret of the all-ruling Mind, the only clue to what seems the ravelled skein, but really is only the marvellous interlacing of the manifold lines, of the providence of God. Beyond is the true Light which is the Life of men, which from behind the cloud shines through and within the soul that looks for it, the Light which irradiates the emancipated spirit's secret recesses, kindles its deeper thoughts, and sheds a halo around all the circumstances, even the most trying passages, of this passing state. Beyond is the hope, of which all present hope is the feeble reflection. Beyond is the joy, on the threshold of which the believing spirit waits, which thrills even now through all its inner senses, growing ever more and more into the delighted consciousness of "the powers of the world to come." And in this anticipated joy sorrow loses all its desolateness, pain ceases to be overpowering, loneliness is cheered, life's burden becomes easy, the bitterness of death is passed.

We come to Thee, sweet Saviour, humbly seeking
Thy shelter when the darkness draweth nigh ;
Fain would our listening spirits hear Thee speaking ;
Be with us, Lord, and whisper, "It is I."

Comfort Thy weary ones, whose hearts are bending
Beneath the burdens of this world of care ;
Show them in dreams "the life that hath no ending,"
And tell them of the joy that waits them there.

Twenty-fourth Sunday after Trinity.

For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of. 2 CORINTHIANS vii. 10.

"GODLY sorrow," *i.e.* the sorrow according to God, the Divine sorrow, "*worketh* repentance to salvation not to be repented of," *i.e.* continues to work as an ever-present impulse, a perpetual, active agent within the inner depths of the soul, continually advancing the penitence which is perfected only when salvation, which knows no place for repentance, is secured. There are changes in the character of the sorrow, marking the progressive working of the Spirit, of Whose presence it is the blessed fruit. At first impetuous, impatient as to too easy forgiveness, eager for mortification and self-revenge, incapable of rest, excitable, absorbed, at times gloomy, fearful, with dark, troubled visions and exaggerated, austere judgments, such is the conscience-stricken sinner's earlier sorrow. This, however, is but transient. It subsides into a calmer state: it becomes humble, accompanied with solemn and reverential, not uneasy, fears of God's inscrutable judgments, tender, sober, quiet, dealing gently, not indulgently, with self; not as before, gushing into tears, yet with tears never far off; quickly melting into prayer, with self-reproaches rising often to the surface, but soon sinking down into hidden depths; never demonstrative, yet always thoughtful; never downcast at falls, but tending ever to greater watchfulness, nor seeking consolation, because possessing its own hidden manna, which it would not barter away for any joy; trembling even at the joy of God, lest it lose its own sweet sadness, treasured as the very safeguard of its life. Penitential sorrow is like the torrent from the mountain, at first rushing down its steep bed among the rocks, afterwards more quietly stealing and winding amidst the still pastures.

Twenty-fourth Monday after Trinity.

We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the Saints, for the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the Gospel; which is come upon you, as it is in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you, since the day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth. COLOSSIANS i. 3-6.

How full of a heavenly mind is this prayer and thanksgiving! It is not for their outward increase or profession that he prays, but "for the hope laid up" for them "in heaven," for their faith and love and the fruits of the Spirit. He knew that their vocation required the best fruits. If there are the three great graces without which none can enter into heaven, so there are many others that must follow in their train. How dear these fruits of the Spirit are to our Saviour! how graciously He accepts them! In working for others you work for Him; and you never could do His work at all unless He, the very and eternal Sun of Righteousness, cheer and warm you. We need to ask the prayers of others to keep us in the way of everlasting life. "Brethren, pray for us." The prayers of the Saints make the ties to that heavenly city, the New Jerusalem, so much stronger, and the ties to this world so much weaker. You aiding your fellow-Christians and they assisting you, the God of strength, unto Whom all prayers come, will support and strengthen you now and for ever, that ye may stand complete in all the will of God. Paul and his friend earnestly contending in prayer for those Christians whom the Apostle had never seen! Here is the secret of the conversion of the world.

As gently rippling o'er the leafy shade
Comes the soft sighing gale, and passes o'er,
E'en so in heaven each prayer, in secret made,
Ruffles a thousand wings prepared for instant aid.

Twenty-fourth Tuesday after Trinity.

Ye also helping together by prayer for us, that for the gift bestowed upon us by the means of many persons thanks may be given by many on our behalf. 2 CORINTHIANS i. 11.

IF the prayer of a multitude delivered Paul from danger, is it not our duty to expect that we shall derive great benefits from this advocacy? For since we are weak when praying by ourselves, but when we are assembled we become stronger, we importune God by our numbers. So great is the power of the supplication of the many. Therefore it is that we all assemble in God's house day after day, that we may more effectually draw God to show compassion. S. Chrysostom says, "Thy prayer has not such great force as when it is made in company with thine own fellow-members—as when the body of the Church in its integrity sends up its prayer with one voice while the priests are present and are offering up the prayers of the universal multitude." Would you learn how great is the force of prayer made in the Church? Peter was bound in prison, but prayer being made with earnestness by the assembled Church, straightway an angel delivered him out of the prison. What then can be more powerful than prayer?

Be mute who will, who can,
Yet I will pray Thee with impassioned voice ;
My heart, that may forget Thee in the crowd,
Cannot forget Thee here ; where Thou hast built,
For Thy own glory, in the wilderness !
Me didst Thou constitute a priest of Thine,
In such a temple as we now behold
Reared for Thy presence ; therefore am I bound
To worship here, and everywhere.

Twenty-fourth Wednesday after Trinity.

Walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work. COLOSSIANS i. 10.

CONSIDER how entirely the body depends upon the spirit for life ; even so the soul's life depends upon the Spirit of Jesus. It is more profitable to cleave to Him in simplicity than to distract ourselves with many thoughts, however admirable in themselves ; for thus His Spirit inspires all we do, and breathing upon our most trifling actions, it rules and guides each and all. Was not the Blood of Christ our Ransom? Are we not bought with a price? If we were not already Christ's by creation, we are His by redemption. His rights must be set forth in His control over our actions. It were but little to possess the tree and have no power over the fruit. And the way in which He exercises this Divine right is by influencing our every action. He has a right over all our actions, for He is the Head over our body, which is the Church. In Him "all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord." If we are "the body of Christ, and members in particular," we ought to be so filled with His Spirit that every word, every movement, be influenced by Him. We should walk as He walked, speak as He spoke, so that it be not we who live, but Christ that liveth in us. We are bound to Him.

So be Thy presence in our hearts,
So Thou alone within us shine,
That, dead to all vain earth imparts,
Our life may be Thy Breath Divine.

Twenty-fourth Thursday after Trinity.

Increasing in the knowledge of God. COLOSSIANS i. 10.

IT is a sign of life when men pray for the wants of their own souls, and for the souls of those more immediately connected with them ; but intercessions for others, for the Church of Christ, for the conversion of sinners, for the building up of Saints in the faith,—this is a sign of more abundant life. “Christ did not die to leave man as he was, sinful, ignorant, and miserable. He did not die to see His purchased possession as feeble in good works, as poor spirited, and as desponding as before He came. He died to make him a being that He might rejoice in, to make him a partaker of the Divine nature, to fill him within and without with a flood of grace, and to pour upon him virtue upon virtue and power upon power, each acting upon each, and working together one and all, till he becomes an angel upon earth instead of an outcast. He died to bestow upon him that privilege which implies all others, and brings him into nearest resemblance to Himself, the privilege of intercession. Christ intercedes above and the Christian intercedes below.” If, then, we have life so as to pray for ourselves, let us have, as we may and as we ought to have, more abundant life, so that as priests of Christ and of God we should pray for others. If He came to make us priests of God and of Himself, we but honour Him the more when we exercise our priesthood.

Here, whene'er they seek Thy strength,
Hallow their endeavour,
In Thee to be built up at length,
To abide for ever.

Twenty-fourth Friday after Trinity.

I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men. 1 TIMOTHY ii. 1.

LET our times of Holy Communion be especially times of intercession. Precious moments should these be to us, for the Lord's death is then being set forth before God, Angels, and men. The great sacrificial memorial of the Son of God is being made. We are then joining in that great act of intercession which is going on at the right hand of God. Be much, then, on your knees at such a time. Have the wants of your Church, the wants of your families and friends, the wants of your ministers, the conversion of sinners, the spread of the Gospel, the unity of the mystical Body of Christ,—have these all-important things much in your hearts and on your lips, and you know not what blessings you may call down from Him Who came to confer upon us, His brethren, no small benefits, no commonplace privileges; Who came to fit us for no mean duties, and to enable us to fill no mean places in His heavenly kingdom. Even here

There is the altar which our life supplies;
The voice is silent, lest it should do wrong
To things which are too high for mortal tongue;
The heavens are looking on with wondering eyes,
And angel faces crowd the o'erhanging skies.
Shall men unheeding to the temple throng
Where God is present? Watchful evermore
Let calm obeisance at Thine altar wait,
And lowly bowing reverence keep the door
Of our dull hearts; that there we may be brought
To the society of holy thought,
Revering God, to man compassionate.

Twenty-fourth Saturday after Trinity.

Lift up your eyes. S. JOHN iv. 35.

It is said of our blessed Lord that as He went about "virtue went out of Him and healed them all," and "as many as touched Him were made immediately whole." We as Christians are brought into this presence of Christ full of healing virtue, and all our life is full of opportunities—opportunities of Sacraments; opportunities of prayer, of promoting the salvation of ourselves and others; opportunities of some active charity whereby we may touch Christ. Our time is replete with these, and Christ is going about and meeting us, now in one way, now in another. One year of such probation is now fast coming to a close.

Days and moments quickly flying,
Blend the living with the dead;
Soon will you and I be lying
Each within our narrow bed.

Soon our souls to God Who gave them
Will have sped their rapid flight;
Able now by grace to save them,
O that while we can we might!

Jesu, Infinite Redeemer,
Maker of this mighty frame,
Teach, O teach us to remember
What we are and whence we came,

Whence we came and whither wending!
Soon we must through darkness go,
To inherit bliss unending
Or eternity of woe.

As the tree falls, so must it lie:
As the man lives, so will he die;
As the man dies, such must he be,
All through the days of eternity.

Twenty-fifth Sunday after Trinity.

He will be our Guide even unto death. PSALM xlviii. 14.

A FEW short years and this world will have shrivelled into nothing. A few brief years and all after which thou couldest ever chase, and ten thousand times more than thou canst ever attain, will be to thee as nothing in thy grasp ; and nought will remain save its effects on thy soul, nought save thy thoughts, words, deeds, good or evil, by which thou wilt be judged. For that day God made thee ; for that Jesus redeemed thee. He longeth for thee for whom He died. He stretcheth forth His Hands to thee from the Cross and desireth to receive thee. For thou art a part of the travail of His soul of Whom the Prophet saith, " He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied." He, thy Life, willeth to be to thee the Way. He, if thou commit thyself unto Him, will bring thee to Himself. He will be thy Guide unto death. " Then, when the world and all that is therein shall be burnt up ; " then, in that glorious dawn of true knowledge, uncreated glory, essential love, thou shalt have the sight of God, the likeness to God, thy Master's praise, thy Master's joy. If thou have indeed, in purpose of heart, chosen the will of God, thou wilt know what it is to have chosen God Himself.

Every idle hope be gone,
Speaking peace when there is none ;
None but Jesus, none but He
Peace can ever speak to me.

Till I feel my sins removed,
And—assured that I am loved—
Lean upon my Saviour's Breast,
I can never think of rest.

S. Andrew's Day.

And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea : for they were fishers. And He saith unto them, Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men. And they straightway left their nets, and followed Him. S. MATTHEW IV. 18-20.

LITTLE as Scripture tells us concerning S. Andrew, it affords us enough for a lesson, and that an important one. S. Andrew was the first convert among the Apostles ; he was especially in our Lord's confidence ; thrice is he described as introducing others to Him ; lastly, he is little known in history, while the place of dignity and the name of highest renown have been allotted to his brother Simon, whom he was the means of bringing to the knowledge of his Saviour. Our lesson, then, is this, that those men are not necessarily the most useful men in their generation, nor the most favoured by God, who make the most noise in the world. If we would trace truly the hand of God in human affairs, and pursue His bounty as displayed in the world to its original sources, we must unlearn our admiration of the powerful and distinguished, our reliance on the opinion of society, our respect for the decisions of the learned or the multitude, and turn our eyes to private life, watching in all we read or witness for the true signs of God's presence, the graces of personal holiness manifested in His elect ; which, weak as they may seem to mankind, are mighty through God, and have an influence upon the course of His providence, and bring about great events in the world at large.

Ah, Lord ! that I may be
This chosen vessel meet for Thee ;
That I, so poor,
May joy o'er Thy great wealth in store ;
That I, so frail, weak—utterly—
May strengthened be of Thine and Thee.

S. Thomas the Apostle.

Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen Me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed. S. JOHN xx. 29.

S. THOMAS is the Apostle who doubted of our Lord's resurrection. This want of faith has given him a sort of character in the minds of most people, which is referred to in the Collect for the day. Yet we must not suppose that he differed greatly from the other Apostles. They all more or less mistrusted Christ's promises when they saw Him led away to be crucified. His especial doubts of Christ were not altogether owing to circumstances, but in a measure arose from some faulty state of mind. We are not so much concerned with considerations respecting the natural disposition and temper of this blessed Apostle as with the particular circumstance in which his name occurs, and with our Saviour's comment upon it. All His disciples minister to Him; and, as in other ways, so also in giving occasion for the words of grace which proceed from His Mouth. They minister to Him even in their weaknesses, which are often brought to sight in the Scriptures, not hidden as Christian friends would hide in pity, that so He may convert them into instruction and comfort for His Church. Thus Martha's over-earnestness in household duties has drawn from Him a sanction for a life of contemplation and prayer; and so in the history before us the over-caution of S. Thomas has gained for us His promise of especial blessing on those who believe without having seen.

Leave me unabated trust in Thee,
And let Thy favour, to the end of life,
Inspire me with ability to seek
Repose and hope among eternal things,
Father of heaven and earth! and I am rich,
And will possess my portion in content.

Conversion of S. Paul.

For I am the least of the Apostles, that am not meet to be called an Apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am : and His grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain ; but I laboured more abundantly than they all : yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.
I CORINTHIANS xv. 9, 10.

THE Holy Spirit is quenched by open transgressions of conscience and contempt of His authority. But when men err in ignorance, following closely their own notions of right and wrong, though these notions be mistaken, great as is their sin, if they might have possessed themselves of truer notions (and very great as was S. Paul's sin, because he certainly might have learned from the Old Testament far clearer and diviner doctrine than the tradition of the Pharisees), yet such men are not left by the God of all grace. God leads them on to the light in spite of their errors in faith, if they continue strictly to obey what they believe to be His will. And to declare this comfortable truth to us, S. Paul was thus carried on by the providence of God, and brought into the light by miracle, that we may learn, by a memorable instance of His grace, what He ever does, though He does not in ordinary cases thus declare it openly to the world. Who has not felt a fear lest he be wandering from the true doctrine of Christ? Let him cherish and obey the holy light of conscience within him, as Saul did ; let him carefully study the Scriptures, as Saul did not ; and the God Who had mercy even on the persecutor of His Saints will assuredly shed His grace upon him, and bring him into the truth as it is in Jesus.

From day to day, from hour to hour,
Oh, let our rising spirits prove
The strength of Thine almighty power,
The sweetness of Thy saving love.

Purification of S. Mary the Virgin.

The Lord, Whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple.
MALACHI iii. 1.

TO-DAY we are reminded of the noiseless course of God's providence, His tranquil accomplishment, in the course of nature, of great events long designed; and again, the suddenness and stillness of His visitations. Consider what the occurrence in question consists in. A little child is brought to the temple, as all first-born children were brought. There is nothing here uncommon or striking, so far. His parents are with him, poor people, bringing the offering of pigeons or doves for the purification of the mother. They are met in the temple by an old man, who takes the child in his arms, offers a thanksgiving to God, and blesses the parents, and next are joined by a woman of a great age. She gives thanks also, and speaks concerning the child to other persons who are present. Let us then turn this festival to account by taking it as the memorial day of His visitations. Let us from the events it celebrates lay up deep in our hearts the recollection how mysteriously little things are in this world connected with great, how single moments, improved or wasted, are the salvation or ruin of all important interests. Let us bear the thought upon us when we come to worship in God's house, that any such season of service may, for what we know, be wonderfully connected with some ancient purpose of His announced before we were born, and have its determinate bearing on our eternal welfare. Let us fear to miss the Saviour, while Simeon and Anna find Him.

It was no path of flowers,
Through this dark world of ours,
Beloved of the Father, Thou didst tread;
And shall we, in dismay,
Shrink from the narrow way,
When clouds and darkness are around it spread?

S. Matthias's Day.

Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.
REVELATION iii. 11.

THERE is something sad and awful in this festival, for our thoughts dwell less on S. Matthias than on that fallen apostle into whose place he was chosen. The history of Judas is very terrible ; it reminds us of the Angels that kept not their first estate, of our first parents falling from Paradise, and of Christians who fall from their state of grace. The suddenness of his fall, its irremediable nature ; the blessedness of his privileges, the trifling temptation for which they were sold ; his apparent sanctity throughout, so as for him to have been suspected of none ; our Lord's many warnings to him, the many tokens of His love to the very last ; his indifference to them all ;—these things are especial warnings. The Gospel for to-day points out how to escape a downfall so terrible : “ be not high-minded, but fear.”

How shall a child of God fulfil
His vow to cleanse his soul from ill,
And raise on high his baptism-light,
Like Aaron's seed in vestment white
And holy-hearted Nazarite ?

First, let him shun the haunts of vice,
Sin-feast, or heathen sacrifice ;
Fearing the board of wealthy pride,
Or heretic, self-trusting guide,
Or where the adulterer's smiles preside.

Next, as he threads the maze of men,
Aye must he lift his witness, when
A sin is spoke in Heaven's dread face,
And none at hand of higher grace
The cross to carry in his place.

But if he hears and sits him still,
First, he will lose his hate of ill ;
Next, fear of sinning, after hate ;
Small sins his heart then desecrate ;
And last, despair persuades to great.

Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord ; be it unto me according to thy word. S. LUKE i. 38.

WONDERFUL moment, on which depended all the destiny of mankind ; for in the things of the Spirit the will of man must ever co-operate with the Divine call. And here was perfect faith, humility, and submission. Sanctified by the Holy Ghost, her heart had already by faith conceived the Son of God before He was conceived in her womb. Calm as deep waters and thoughtful ; as the morning cloud that discloses the rising sun ; as the star that first appears when the storm is retiring. Sarah laughed at the strangeness of that salvation beyond all that she looked for ; but Mary is composed and reflective, as one that wondered at nothing from the power and the goodness of God. Zacharias doubted, and by a sign was corrected ; Mary doubted not, but by a sign was strengthened. But as in the blessed Virgin all was of faith, so “if ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established.” “Blessed is the womb that bare Thee,” said one to our blessed Lord Himself ; but He said, “Yea, rather blessed are they that hear the Word of God and keep it.” Blessed, indeed, to have conceived Christ in the womb, and to have given birth to the Saviour of the world ; more blessed is it to have conceived Christ in the heart by faith, that He may there indwell and abide for ever.

Blessèd is the womb that bore Him, blessed
The bosom where His lips were pressed ;
But rather blessed are they
Who hear His Word and keep it well,
The living homes where Christ shall dwell,
And never pass away.

S. Mark's Day.

I am the vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without Me ye can do nothing. S. JOHN xv. 5.

NOTHING without Thee, O blessed Saviour! But all things are we able to do with and by Thee. The Saints of Christ abide in Him, and then He bringeth forth fruit in them; for it is not the branch that bears fruit of itself, but it is the tree that bears fruit in the branch. He bears in them fruit like Himself, a life like His life, His works of mercy and lowliness and constant prayer. And their words are His words; for if He abideth abundantly in the heart, from that abundance the mouth speaketh. And their prayers are His prayers; for it is His Spirit that prayeth in them and heareth their prayers, and He knoweth that their prayers are heard. Therefore all is of faith—of “faith which worketh by love”—and all is in humility which is a perpetual prayer for His aid. It is ours to hunger and thirst, but it is His to fill with righteousness. “The branch must be in the vine,” says S. Augustine, “or in the fire.” It is the peculiarity of the vine branch, as the Prophet says, that “it is meet for no work;” if it bears not fruit it is good for no other use, but is burned. O how awful a type of the human soul, which, if it lives not to God, can live no other life, but is lost!

Do to God your service. . . .
Christ hath called you branches Who is Himself the Vine;
O see ye be not barren, nor bitter fruit ye give,
If with the Root that bears you ye would for ever live.

True fruitful Vine, . . .
Deign us to feed, to cleanse us deign;
From second death and bitter pain
Deliver us, O Lord!

S. Philip and S. James's Day.

Lord, we know not whither Thou goest ; and how can we know the way? . . . Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us.
S. JOHN xiv. 5, 8.

THE sayings here mentioned of S. Thomas and S. Philip are both instances of weakness of faith in those Apostles. "Show us the Father, and it sufficeth us." But this prayer of Philip, though he may not so have intended it, does indeed express a great truth, namely, that the knowledge of God through faith is what can alone satisfy man's soul ; as it is written, "Acquaint now thyself with Him, and be at peace." It is well if we are taught this, and are ever praying that this knowledge may be increased and this faith confirmed in us. Faith is the foundation of the whole spiritual building, whereby we are built on Christ Jesus. It is the root of the whole spiritual life of grace, the ground whereon the soul rests securely, the beginning of our spiritual existence. Faith goes even before love, in thought, but not in deed. It goes before love in thought ; for we love because we believe, not believe because we love. Faith gives us, in this our state, the knowledge of Him Whom we love ; faith is instead of eyes. By faith we see Him Who to our eyes of sense is unseen.

Faith is a living power from heaven,
That grasps the promise God hath given,
A trust that cannot be o'erthrown,
Fixed heartily on Christ alone.

Faith finds in Christ whate'er we need
To save or strengthen us indeed,
Receives the grace He sends us down,
And makes us share His cross and crown.

We thank Thee then, O God of heaven,
That Thou to us this faith hath given
In Jesus Christ Thy Son, Who is
Our only Fount and Source of bliss.

S. Barnabas the Apostle.

They sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch. Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord. ACTS xi. 22, 23.

S. BARNABAS, termed by his colleagues a son of consolation, was qualified, doubtless, by natural ability to console. He was deeply attached to his relations; a soft and amiable trait of character, which sometimes, however, as it probably did in his case, indisposes us to listen to the stern voice of principle. He loved to promote unity between those who had a common object at heart; and he appears, accordingly, as the peacemaker between Paul and the original Apostles, who at first, from his antecedents, felt for him some amount of estrangement. He was a retiring man, liking to put others forward, and see them filling the post for which God had qualified them. It is a gentle, unobtrusive character, such as this, which has a capacity for comforting; and according to S. Barnabas' capacity, so was his gift. None can really and spiritually comfort others, however naturally qualified for it, *except by* the gift of the Comforter. Then,

Warmed underneath the Comforter's safe wing,
They spread the endearing warmth around.
Mourners, speed here your broken hearts to bring,
Here healing dews and balms abound;
Here are soft hands that cannot bless in vain,
By trial taught your pain;
Here loving hearts that daily know
The heavenly consolation they on you bestow.
New hearts before their Saviour's Feet to lay,
This is their first, their dearest joy;
Their next, from heart to heart to clear the way
For mutual love without alloy;
Never so blest as when in Jesus' roll
They write some hero soul,
More pleased upon his brightening road
To wait, than if their own with all his radiance glowed.

S. John Baptist's Day.

Prepare ye the way of the Lord. S. MATTHEW iii. 3.

THE Holy Spirit selects for His instruments in revealing His mind special persons who are distinguished for the practical manifestation of the truths revealed. S. John the Baptist, the great preacher of repentance, and his "raiment of camel's hair," his "girdle about his loins," his meat of "locusts and wild honey," tell of an inner man mortifying his flesh in the deepest humiliation of penitential sorrow. While he cleansed the multitudes who confessed before him the sins of their renounced lives, was not his power laid in the fact that his own lifelong work had been by vigil and prayer, by loneliness and abstinence, to purge away the darkness of the flesh that hid from his longing gaze the blessed vision of the promised Messiah? And yet he was sanctified from his mother's womb. And he went before the very Face of the Lord to prepare His way. Of what, then, had he to repent? What exemption from sin was involved in the special gift of the Holy Ghost, almost coeval with his conception, is not revealed; but even if no actual sin were committed, if the sanctification from the womb guarded him from any single fall, yet he bore within him the fount, the cause of all possible sin, the outgoing of which he read, if not in his own consciousness, yet in the records of humanity around him. He felt, he saw, through his greater light, the seeds of evil within himself. He had learned to reprove the sin which lurked, though perpetually restrained, within himself; and so disciplined, he could all the more earnestly reprove its outgoings in the world. So, Lord,

Cleanse Thou our heart from guilty stain,
That we may speak in holy strain.

S. Peter's Day.

He . . . wept bitterly. S. MATTHEW xxvi. 75.

THERE is a tradition that S. Peter, even to his last days, whenever he heard the crowing of the cock, wept afresh. It was the continued silent lingering swell of the storm which broke through his heart when on ~~that~~ dark night "he went out and wept bitterly." His Epistles are remarkably calm; none of the bitterness of the penitent's woe appears. But no apostolic Epistles contain so many and so touching appeals for humility and reverential fear. True penitence is a lifelong thing; a perennial flow of godly sorrow, not the gushing of a fountain once opened to be quickly closed; an abiding state, not a passing paroxysm; a clothing which the Saint lays not aside until it be exchanged for the robe made white in the Blood of the Lamb. And even then we know not how much of the hue and colour that melts into the perfect light is composed of the sadness of penitence, even as the rainbow above and about the throne is drawn upwards from tears of earth to be suffused with the Divine glory. Recall, therefore, the hated past, not to diminish hope, but to increase godly sorrow; not to cloud the vision of the Redeemer, but to deepen the sense of His loving forgiveness, not to lessen the recovered power, but to infuse into this power a profounder tenderness; not to separate from God, but to unite with Him by a firmer and a closer bond. Look well and see, not merely if there be any way of wickedness in you, but what your repentance has been, its motives, its depths, its reality, the truth of its sorrow, the honesty of its purpose, the fulness of its resolves, the perseveringness of its resistance of sin, its progress from grace to grace and "from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

S. James the Apostle.

And [Jesus] saith unto them, Ye shall drink indeed of My cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with: but to sit on My right hand, and on My left, is not Mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of My Father. S. MATTHEW xx. 23.

IN these words, to which the festival of S. James the Greater especially directs our minds, our Lord solemnly declares that the high places of His kingdom are not His to give, which can mean nothing else than that the assignment of them does not simply and absolutely depend upon Him; for that He will actually dispense them at the last day, and moreover is the meritorious cause of any being given, is plain from Scripture. He avers most solemnly that something besides His own will and choice is necessary for obtaining the posts of honour about His throne, so that we are naturally led to ask *where* it is that this awful prerogative is lodged. Is it with His Father? He proceeds to speak of His Father; but neither does He assign it to Him: "It shall be given to them for whom it is *prepared* of My Father." The Father's foreknowledge and design are announced, not His choice: "Whom He did foreknow, them He did predestinate." He prepares the reward, and confers it—but upon whom? No answer is given us, unless it is conveyed in the words which follow—upon the humble: "Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant."

I give it not by partial love;
But in My Father's book are writ
What names on earth shall lowliest prove,
That they in heaven may highest sit.
Take up the lesson, O my heart;
Thou Lord of meekness, write it there,
Thine own meek self to me impart,
Thy lofty hope, Thy lowly prayer.

S. Bartholomew the Apostle.

There was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest. S. LUKE xxii. 24.

WHEN our Saviour reproved His disciples, He did so with great gentleness and forbearance; while He lamented their infirmities, His love still dwelt on every proof of their fidelity. He does not now say, Ye are they over whom I have so tenderly watched, and who are now about to forsake Me, but He adds, "Ye are they which have continued with Me in My temptations." He passes over the evil, and sees nothing but the good. He had chosen them, had enlightened them by His doctrine, had strengthened them by His miracles; all the good they had was from Himself; yet even this He attributes unto them, rewards them for it, and admits them to share with Him His own inheritance. What is all this to us? Much, even as much as it was to them. First of all, it notes the unspeakable privileges of this apostolic union; secondly, that lowliness of heart on which that union and those privileges will depend. How can we preserve inwardly, each for himself in his own station, that apostolic fellowship, and derive through it this blessed union with Christ and God? It is through humility that the peace of God watches over and keeps the heart in that love.

I have been honoured and obeyed,
I have met scorn and slight;
And my heart loves earth's sober shade
More than her laughing light.

For what is rule but a sad weight
Of duty and a snare?
What meanness, but with happier fate
The Saviour's Cross to share?

This my hid choice, if not from heaven,
Moves on the heavenward line;
Cleanse it, good Lord, from earthly leaven,
And make it simply Thine.

S. Matthew the Apostle.

I will have mercy, and not sacrifice. S. MATTHEW ix. 13.

SACRIFICE, indeed, is good and necessary, but it is of no avail at all without mercy, which sanctifieth the gift ; but both sacrifice and mercy were found together in this lowly Evangelist. He made a sacrifice of all that he had, but in doing so was as if he made no sacrifice at all on account of love. He had found the treasure hid in a field, and for joy thereof he went and sold all that he had and bought that field. In poverty of spirit he found the Door into the kingdom of heaven. In giving up all, he had no doubt found that “ manifold more in this present time ” which our blessed Saviour promises to them that do so. He had parted with the shadows, and had found great substance ; he had given up things temporal, and had found things eternal. We indeed know not—no understanding of man can know—what he gained. It is ever spoken of as hidden ; it is treasure hid ; it is the hidden manna ; and as our Lord adds in the Apocalypse, “ I will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written which no man knoweth, saving he that receiveth it.” Such is the love of God in the soul ; the heart which is in heaven, because the treasure hath been laid up there.

At once he rose, and left his gold ;
His treasure and his heart
Transferred, where he shall safe behold
Earth and her idols part ;
While he beside his endless store
Shall sit, and floods unceasing pour
Of Christ's true riches o'er all time and space,
First angel of His Church, first steward of His grace.

S. Michael and all Angels.

Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation? HEBREWS i. 14.

THE blessed Angels are not as stars above us, unconcerned spectators on their silent watches. One thing is mentioned of them by our Lord which at first on hearing it might well amaze us, viz. that the highest of these glorious spirits watch over the **most** humble Christian. On consideration we may see, that so far from this being a thing incredible, in fact it must be so. For if the love of God towards us is so infinitely great, His merciful humiliations for our sakes surpassing man's understanding, those blessed Angels who approach the nearest His throne must partake of that love. It is in the presence of God that the Angels learn this love, from beholding His Countenance. We learn the same by drawing near to Him ; by prayer ; by the Sacrament of His Body and Blood. Especially we may resemble the holy Angels, and become like them, by prayers for others in all their necessities. We may do them good, unseen and unknown of those who receive from them that aid which they most require. He that "went about doing good" spent His whole nights in prayer. "Their Angels behold the Face of God," that is, their guardian Angels. This is to be noted by us in speaking of the example of the holy Angels as applicable to those who have the guardianship of others, especially of Christ's little ones. If they are not ministering to them in more active services, how unceasing should they be in this duty of intercession, by beholding the Face of God in prayers, in sanctifying themselves for their sakes, in order that they may pray for them the more acceptably.

O jealous God ! how could a sinner dare
Think on that dreadful day,
But that with all Thy wounds Thou wilt be there,
And all our angel friends to bring Thee on Thy way ?

S. Luke the Evangelist.

The skill of the physician shall lift up his head. ECCLESIASTICUS xxxviii. 3.

It is fitting that on the festival of a physician, of a Physician we should speak. Now, as so often from the Saint we look to the Saint of all Saints, so here from the physician to the Physician of all physicians. "The skill of the Physician shall lift up his head." All holy men have taught us to see in the work of our redemption, next to its love, its skill. "In the thing wherein they dealt proudly, He was above them all."

For the work of our salvation
Needs would have his order so ;
And the multi-form deceiver's
Art by art would overthrow ;
And from thence would bring the medicine
Whence the insult of the foe.

It was the skill of our own, our dear Physician which displayed itself, earlier, in those answers which put all men to silence, which forced even His enemies to declare, "Never man spake like this man;" the "Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and unto God the things which are God's;" the "God is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living; ye therefore do greatly err;"—the answers to questions, so that "neither from that day forth durst any man ask Him any more," which culminated in the skill that out of weakness produced everlasting strength, out of the place of a skull gave us our first view of restored Paradise; that, as the mediæval Saints are so fond of interpreting the passage of Job, under the bait of manifested humanity hid the hook of concealed Divinity, and so drew out Leviathan, and so made him to be meat for the people in the wilderness; that is, so made all his temptations a way to us (save by our own falls) of spiritual progress.

S. Simon and S. Jude, Apostles.

If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. S. JOHN xv. 19.

THINK not by any means—by eloquence, or wealth, or power, or gifts of body or mind, or by gentleness and benevolence—to escape or overcome this hatred of the world. This were to think that ye can do what your Lord could not do. Yet, alas! how many seek to be popular and at the same time good Christians—to combine in themselves things contrary; such must needs end in shipwreck of the faith. “Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept My saying, they will keep yours also.” It is a mistake to suppose that the world can ever be so brought to the obedience of Christ as that hatred and persecution should cease. Nay, they are necessary for the perfection of the faithful, for their strength and comfort. For as dangers and storms without are the occasion of the hen gathering her chickens under her wings, to be cherished there together, so these things increase in the Saints the love of God and of each other.

He loves when some clear soaring mind
Is drawn by mutual piety
To simple souls and unrefined,
Who in life's shadiest covert lie.
Or if perchance a saddened heart
That once was gay and felt the spring,
Cons slowly o'er its altered part,
In sorrow and remorse to sing,
Thy gracious care will send that way
Some spirit full of glee, yet taught
To bear the sight of dull decay,
And nurse it with all-pitying thought.

All Saints' Day.

The rich and poor meet together: the Lord is the Maker of them all. PROVERBS xxii. 2.

ALL Saints' Day, a glorious day binding together in a golden chain all past generations of those who have fought a good fight and kept the faith! We look along the whole procession of Saints—Patriarchs, Apostles, Martyrs, Confessors, Virgins, etc.; some with an earthly diadem surrounded by the celestial aureole; some with the beggar habit now transfigured so as no fuller on earth can white it. Here young men and maidens, old men and children, do of a verity praise the Name of the Lord. And He, from Whom no secrets are hid, sees a future vista of Saints as yet unborn; sees the noble army of Martyrs that shall testify during the reign of Antichrist, "when," as S. Anselm says, "the persecutor shall do marvellous miracles and the persecuted shall not be able to perform one." All these He sees. He sees, too, those unknown Saints at this time walking through the valley of Baca who in due season shall be proclaimed to the Church to have received the palm; He sees those who shall leave no name behind them on earth. Out of some miserable cottage that we pass and pity God may take some of His brightest jewels into the "house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." Look forward, see what ought to be, see what is expected from you.

Brave quiet is the thing for thee,
Chiding the scrupulous fears;
Learn to be real, from the thought
Of the eternal years.

Bear gently, suffer like a child,
Nor be ashamed of tears;
Kiss the sweet cross, and in thy heart
Sing of the eternal years.

One cross can sanctify a soul;
Late Saints and ancient Seers
Were what they were, because they mused
Upon the eternal years.

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